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and Certain Aspects of the Secret Tradition

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[*In preparation.*

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for those who are sufficiently concerned to have ceased from talking nonsense, if still inclined to idle. It is not a book of research, for example, in the sense of a certain Psychical Society, nor is it the product of a school, like the last contribution, let us suppose, to the prolonged parable of Theosophy in the West. It assumes of necessity in the reader a recognition—however, for the rest, *dilettante*—that, in the last resource, there are a few questions only which can be held to demand our solicitude. These questions are assuredly formulated as whence we come and whither we are going; but of such are the elementary aspects, the answers to which ought to include a demonstration, and they do not belong to the present category, estimable and desirable as they are. It follows that the root-matter of my particular subject is the design of getting back whence we came, and it does not therefore appeal to any one who happens to be asking in his exile specifically concerning the whence or the whither. At the same time, and because I am, for my failings, denied any masters of this day, I have elected to take a lesson from the *Hours with the Mystics*, as one who profits by a caution, which is the reason that I have mentioned this honourable writer. In the place of *mise en scène* and a congeries of colloquial trifles, I have, by way of relief, treated several matters which are like sign-posts directing to the temple, and for this I make my apology to those who are in no need of such guidance or alleviations of this kind. Perhaps I have followed, on the whole, a course which can be reasonably justified otherwise. A writer on personal religion does not begin his thesis by an illustration of the argument from design, or by a demonstration concerning Him who brought life and immortality to light. I have therefore imagined that my readers are to some extent in the position of the Masonic Brotherhood, prepared to admit their conviction that God is and that He recompenses those who seek Him out, from which idea of recompense follows that of their survival in the spiritual part of their nature. Masonically, therefore, they believe in the Grand Architect of the Universe and in a resurrection to a future life. With this belief there is bound up all that is required by the mystics for the proper exhibition of their science. I have endeavoured in the first part to speak of some things generally, and because they are designed as an introduction they are here and there expounded somewhat lightly. The method of all the papers is in a sense progressive, and it is for this reason that they are in a manner detached, indeed almost independent, without being really disconnected. In the second part I have discussed a few issues of history, seeking to indicate how several 'curious things of the outside world' will be looked at from the mystic standpoint, though most of them do not in fine matter, or at least vitally, to the mystics. They are important occasionally to those possessed otherwise of the required dispositions. I mean to say that the evidences of mesmerism, hypnotism, and modern spiritualism are a little like those of teleology; they are first aids to the wounded and straws to drowning men who have previously made shipwreck of their faith, because faith has with them never passed into experience. Most persons who have suffered conviction on these subjects get no further, but at the same time such indications do open roads for those who can see a little distance into the rays beyond the common intellectual spectrum. I have reserved for the third part some other matters, which, as I regard them, are of the greater moment, and I have discussed them under the guise of certain quests of initiation, because it is imperative that one who has been led through many schools to the recognition of those ultimate attainments which are not to be found in schools, should do honour to his leading, even when he is called to admit that one difference between the Secret of the King and the Divine Secret is that we have been counselled to conceal the one while the other conceals itself. For the purpose of these papers it is in no sense needful that the reader should belong to the schools, or should be acquainted with more than the reports concerning them, just as it is rather by way of indulgence than otherwise that a born writer should have his readers, though perhaps it is a counsel of perfection that he should not desire them. To many persons this third part will convey intimations of surprise that, among the secret schools, several which seem antecedently unlikely, preserve in their symbolical modes not only the first matter but the analogical process of the mystic life. Yet it should not be really surprising, if one remembers that the whole sacramental World of Nature is an economy and symbol of the World of Grace, or that all voices are singing, as it might be said, unconsciously the only theme, not including that one voice which sings willingly in the wilderness of this mortal life. It is solely by way of aberration that literature, in its proper understanding, has dealt with any other subject. This subject is not only in Dante, in Spenser, and in the *Morte D'Arthur*; under several reserves of insufficiency, in the great among great books; but it is in the simplest of church hymns, without equivocation or evasion. So far as it is possible to express the unsearchable heart of the universe, the whole mystery lies in the *Venite Adoremus*, and it is enshrined after another manner in the *Pange Lingua*, because everywhere the *latens Deitas* passes into expression in life. It follows that the Churches are also great centres of advancement and are hence at peace in themselves, as they are in truth with each other, the divisions and inconsanguinities being on the part of the masters in Israel, who do not know that the thresholds are many, because there are many orders which open the secret gates, and still less that, in some cases, the keepers of these gates have their eyes bandaged. The mystic life is otherwise an eirenicon and concordat for all the Churches which may one day come into force, as joy comes in the morning. It is necessary to add that the simple presages and outlines in the first part concerning the union of the mind and the Church will find their complement or extension in the final paper concerning the Veils of the Sanctum Sanctorum. I believe it has been said that only one research engrosses the entire universe, but every individual, however humble, may help to deepen this divine preoccupation; and my toil, such as it is, will not be unjustified if it should, in fine, assist any one to the higher understanding of that sleep which is in Christ.

It may seem, before concluding, an act of intellectual generosity to classify the three directions in which a book of this kind appeals, so that those who enter into none of the categories indicated may return without further solicitude to their proper courses. The first direction would include all those who have come to see that there is another interpretation of life than that which is found in laboratories; of thought than that which is laid down in its conventional laws; of conduct than that which is expressed in written statutes, or in the unwritten codes of society. The second direction comprises those who know that round about the circle of the sciences there is a border-land of the unknown which is from time to time manifested in part, though neither in its latency nor discovery does it belong to the domain of physics. The third direction is the least acknowledged of all, as it is of all the rarest, but it embraces those who have begun to walk in a way which is called inward, and who have heard winning voices therein.

There is one word more, and it especially concerns the office of these prefatory remarks. They are the antithesis of an introductory part, because, in place of leading up, and this simply, to all that which will follow under a certain rule of succession, they deal, after a generical manner, with the total sum of the entire work. They are things which arise from the whole, without being either summary or conclusion, for which reason they do not appear at the close.

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PREFACE

THERE was a time when it was regarded as a thing almost indispensable that any reference to the mystic life or its literature should be prefaced not so much by an apology for the undertaking as for a certain deficiency in taste which seemed to characterise any reference thereto. The accepted constructions found no part in such subjects; the accepted reputations and personalities had scarcely heard of them; and from whatever point of view they might be approached, the mere act was an entrance into a region of obscurity which deserved and usually received the penalty of taboo. When Vaughan wrote his *Hours with the Mystics* he had the saving passport of an especial incapacity and apparently of a congenital dislike. These titles to consideration were associated with the extrinsic assistance of a form which was in part narrative and in part conversational, so that persons under the author's restrictions had, by a device which is to us almost ludicrous, several places of relief to offer them successive distractions from a theme of which most of them understood nothing, by recourse to the amenities of dialogue, and to agreeable immersions in the atmosphere of a library occupied by the upper class man of books. The library had its odour of good intellectual repute which savoured well to those for whom incense would have seemed impious. It came to pass that the book was tolerated and an objectionable subject rather easily condoned on account of its conventional setting. In much the same manner might some South-Sea Islander hear

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of the true God in the discourse of a missionary and then recur to his totems.

The condition which made this possible has now passed away, and there are people enough who would be willing to give years to the mystics, on the understanding that it involved no covenant to spend hours with Mr. Vaughan, regarding whom I must have licence to add how estimable he was, all this notwithstanding; how intelligible for the period of which he happened to be the product; and how entitled, and more than entitled, he remains to our tender consideration for his misfortune in belonging to that unlovely time. I should like further to say that, as there is no epoch which must be put outside the pale of one's justice, we shall do well not to magnify unduly the proportion of amelioration which is indicated by the bare fact that the middle nights of the nineteenth century have in truth passed away. The advantage is perhaps like the better housing of the working-classes; it tends to bring into relief so much that remains to be done after. There are many people to-day with a disposition on the intellectual side towards mysticism, understood as a domain of thought, apart from any region of experience; but it is a little difficult in most cases to determine how far simple disposition signifies, because it is also so difficult to be serious and therefore to be taken seriously. The mood of the moment must be accepted as a sort of substituted second best in those particular trials of speed where the winner only secures what is termed a place. Here also the whole interest lies in what is to come after, as to which the greatest prophet who may rise up can do no more than bless the Israel, hoping somewhat faintly for the higher good, but at least desiring it with ardour. It has seemed possible in any case to say something, not without a touch of indirectness, on various lesser and greater aspects of the mystic subject in the book which here follows. It does not pretend to offer the content of mysticism and still less to formulate a mode of demonstration. It is

PART I

THE HITHER SIDE OF THE PORTAL

THE LIFE OF THE MYSTIC

THERE are many definitions of religion in its absolute consideration, but there is one of them which might include all as their ultimate reduction. There are also many external or official religions and one of them underlying all; there are numerous churches, schools of tradition and doctrine, many differentiations of sect existent in Christendom; but there is one Holy Assembly. It so happens, and this perhaps fortunately, that the definition herein referred to depends on no process in philology, though the word which expresses it indubitably acknowledges a synonym for which a claim of the kind was once made, and plausibly, but it has now, I understand, been voided. The definition is not, therefore, a novelty, which may help to make for its righteousness; it is a variant rather; and because it is no longer considered orthodox in scholarship to say that the word Religion signifies Rebinding, I would suggest alternatively that it is Reunion, which will define also the term desired by the mystic and thus serve fitly as a preliminary to the consideration of his life. Reunion involves the idea of something which has been set loose or has broken away, namely, the individual spirit, the call of which is to return—the reunion of man's essential nature with the Divine Nature being not so much our condign state and beatitude as the one thing needful. It is in all truth so needful that it is only to avoid misconstruction that it is not described as necessary and, in a sense, inevitable. Under all the politic reservations, shall we not then say that our destiny is to get back somehow to God—with our free will, if we can, but get back we must? Shall we not acknowledge that, begin where one may in the universe, all roads lead ultimately to God—that the path of sin leads there, though it passes through perdition by the way? Does not the spirit return to God which gave it? It scarcely concerns us how or why the separation took place originally. We may have many worlds of experience to pass through before we shall sound that silent deep of an immemorial past. It may be true that no written mysticism and no oral traditions of the wise and secret orders can ever expound that mystery, except by the offices of the letters and by such economies as the churches also use; but the end of all mysticism, as of all religion, is to attain that reunion. The possibility is not merely the fundamental doctrine of what is termed in a peculiar manner transcendental religion; it can be said that it is the one doctrine; all else is a question of processes and of such conditions as they involve. Though it is casting the plummet of thought at once into the abyss of a great subject, it seems a question of good counsel to say this, even from the beginning, because it enables us to create a right and valuable distinction between the mystic life and certain extrinsic things which pass as its coincidents and collaterals when they have properly no part therein.

The mystic life may be not inexactly described as the soul's advancement in the path of transcendental religion, and this, almost indubitably, will occasion the question how far it is connected with two subjects much more widely familiar, namely, transcendental science and transcendental philosophy. The answer is that the mystic life is indubitably concerned with an experimental knowledge, because it is concerned with experience, but this experience is within. The path of that life is also a path of wisdom, and its region is entirely that of transcendency. This notwithstanding, it calls to be distinguished expressly from what is officially understood by transcendental sciences, namely, the investigation of psychic phenomena and the pursuit of strange arts, as in like manner from all those branches of transcendental philosophy which are dedicated to the interpretation of the universe apart from that point at which the universe passes into man.

For the better exhibition of these questions I must have recourse to a consideration which is not less important because at first sight it has a certain aspect of artificiality. Seeing therefore that the mystic life, in respect of its nature and mode, is a consideration of religion at its highest, it should be said at the beginning, having regard to all the issues, that there are certain conventional terms which, on the one hand, do not accurately represent the construction placed upon them along a given line, but that construction has been accepted so long and so generally that the defect in the application may be regarded as partially effaced; and, on the other hand, there are also conventional terms between which a distinction has come into existence, although it is not justified by their primary significance. As regards the first class, the very general use of the term 'occult movement' may be taken as an example. It is inexact after two manners: it involves at once too much and too little—too much, because it has served to represent a good deal that is not at all of the occult order; and too little, because a slight change in the point of view would bring within the range of its meaning many things which nobody who now uses it would think of including therein. The doings of more than one great secret political organisation might, in the full sense of the words, require to be classed as part of the occult movement, though no one will need to be informed that the latter is not political; while certain events which have occurred and are occurring in the open day, and have all along challenged the verdict of public opinion, cannot strictly be included in occultism, as they betray none of its external characteristics. I refer to the phenomena of animal magnetism, hypnotism, spiritualism, in a word, all that which is included by the field of psychical research. In respect of the second class, a very clear differentiation now exists between the terms 'occult' and 'mystic,' and it is one also which it is necessary to recognise, though, fundamentally speaking, the two words are identical, differing only in the fact that the first is of Latin and the second of Greek origin. By the occultist we have come to understand the disciple of one or all of the secret sciences; the student, that is to say, of alchemy, astrology, the forms and methods of divination, and of the mysteries which used to be included under the generic description of magic. The mystic at the first attempt is perhaps more difficult to describe, except in the terminology of some particular school of thought; he has no concern as such with the study of the secret sciences; he does not work on materials or investigate forces which exist outside himself; but he endeavours, by a certain training and the application of a defined rule of life, to re-establish correspondence with the Divine Nature from which, in his belief, he originated, and to which his return is only a question of time, or what is commonly understood as evolution. The distinction between the occultist and the mystic, however much the representative of physical science at the present day might be disposed to resent the imputation, is therefore, loosely speaking, or at least from one point of view, the distinction between the man of science and the man of reflection. The statement, as we shall see, is not exhaustive, and it is not indeed descriptive. It may be said more fully, in the words of the late Edward Maitland, that the occultist is concerned with 'transcendental physics, and is of the intellectual, belonging to science,' while the mystic 'deals with transcendental metaphysics, and is of the spiritual, belonging to religion.' Expressed in modern terms, this is really the doctrine of Plotinus, which recognises 'the subsistence of another intellect, different from that which reasons and is denominated rational.' Thus, on the one hand, there are the phenomena of the transcendental, produced on the external plane, capable of verification and analysis, up to a certain point; and, on the other, there is the transcendental life. 'That which is without corresponds with that which is within,' says the most famous Hermetic maxim; indeed the connection suggested is almost that of the circumference with the centre; and if there is a secret of the soul expressed by the term mysticism, the phenomena of the soul manifesting on the external plane must be regarded as important; but these are the domain of occultism. The importance must, of course, differ as the phenomena fall into higher and lower classes; the divinations of geomancy carry an appearance of triviality, while the design of ceremonial magic to establish communication with higher orders of extra-mundane intelligence wears a momentous aspect; but both are the exercise of seership, and this gift, as a testimony to the soul and her powers, is never trivial. In so far as it calls for treatment, it should be on this understanding only, subject, however, to all needful reserves concerning the final insufficiency which is drawn rigidly enough about such circles of research.

THE LIFE OF THE MYSTIC

Assuming therefore a relationship subsisting between occult practice and the transcendental life of the soul, it seems worth while to contrast for a moment the work of the mystic with that of the disciple of occult science, so as to realise as accurately as possible the points of correspondence and distinction between Ruysbroeck, St. John of the Cross, and Saint-Martin, as types of the mystic school, and Arnoldus de Villanova or Martines de Pasqually, as representing the school of occult knowledge. The examples of such a contrast must naturally be sought in the past, because, although the secret sciences are pursued at the present day, and by some ardently, they can scarcely be said to have votaries like those who were of old. The inquiry belongs also to the past in respect of the mystic, for, to speak plainly, the saint belongs to the past. So far as the life of the outside world is concerned, there is little opportunity amidst mundane distractions for the whole-hearted labours of the other centuries. The desire of the house is indeed among us, but the zeal of it is scarcely here, or not, at least, in the sense of the past.

The distinction in question is, however, more than that which is made between the man of action and the man of reflection; and if we cease to speak loosely, it is more than that which differentiates the man of science from the philosopher. There are many instances of synthetic occult philosophers — among them Cornelius Agrippa and Robert Fludd — who neither divined nor evoked — who were not alchemists, astrologers, or theurgists—but rather interpreters and harmonisers; and yet these men were not mystics in the proper sense of the term. Nor is the distinction quite that which constitutes the essential difference between the saint and the specialist, though the occult student of the past was in most cases a specialist who was faithful to his particular branch. The activity and the strenuousness of the life were often greater with the mystic than in the case of the man who was dedicated to some particular division of occult knowledge, though alchemist and astrologer were both laborious men—men whose patience imbued them with something of the spirit which governs modern scientific research. The ground of the contrast is in the purpose which actuated the two schools of experience. The crucible in which metals are transmuted, on the assumption of alchemy, is still a crucible and the converted metal is still a metal; so also the astrologer may trace the occult and imponderable influences of the stars, but the stars are material bodies. The practical work of the mystic concerned, on the contrary, the soul's union with God, for, to state it again, this, and this only, is the end of mysticism. It is no study of psychic forces, nor, except incidentally, is it the story of the soul and her development, such as would be involved in the doctrine of reincarnation. It is essentially a religious experiment, and is the one ultimate and real experiment proposed by true religion. It is for this reason that in citing examples of mystics, I have chosen two men who were eminent for sanctity in the annals of the Christian Church, for we are concerned only with the West; while the third, though technically out of sympathy, essentially belonged to the Church. I must not, therefore, shrink from saying that the alternative name of the mystic is that of the saint when both have attained the end of their experiment. There are also other terms by which we may describe the occultist, but they refer to the school of practice which he follows.

The life of the mystic was then in a peculiar sense the life of sanctity. It was not, of course, his exclusive vocation; if we are to accept the occult sciences at their own valuation, most of them exacted, and that not merely by implication, something more than the God-fearing, clean-living spirit, which is so desirable even in the ordinary business man. He who was in search of transmutation was counselled, in the first instance, to convert himself; the device on the wall of his laboratory was *Labora*, but also *Ora*. The astrologer, who calculated the influences of the stars on man, was taught that, in the last resource, there was a law of grace by which the stars were ruled. Even the conventional magician, he who called and thought that he controlled spirits, knew that the first condition of success in his curious art was to be superior to the weakness of the inconstant creatures whose imputed dwelling is amidst the flux of the elements.

I have said that, in most cases, the occult student was, after his manner, a specialist—he was devoted to his particular branch. Deep down in the heart of the alchemist there may have been frequently the belief that certain times and seasons were more favourable than others to his work; that the concealed materials which he thought of symbolically as the Sun and Moon, as Mercury, Venus or Mars, were not wholly independent of star and planet in the sky; and hence no doubt he knew enough of elementary astrology to avoid afflicted aspects and malign influences. But, outside this, the alchemist was not an astrologer, and to be wise in the lore of the stars was an ambition that was sufficient for one life, without meddling in the experiments of alchemy. On the other hand, the mystic, in common with all the members of his community, having only one object in view, and one method of pursuing it—by the inward way of contemplation—had nothing in the external to differentiate, and could not therefore specialise.

Again, occult science justifies itself as the transmission of a secret knowledge from the past, and the books which represent the several branches of this knowledge bear upon them the outward marks that they are among the modes of its transmission, without which it is certain that, even *ex hypothesi*, there could be no secret sciences. The occult student was, therefore, an initiate in the conventional sense of the term—he was taught, even in astrology. There were schools of kabalism, schools of alchemy, schools of magic, in which the mystery of certain knowledge was imparted from adept to neophyte, from master to pupil. It is over this question of corporate union that we have yet another analogy and another distinction between the mystic and the occultist. The former, as we find him in the West, may in a sense be called an initiate, because he was trained in the rule of the Church; but the historical traces of secret association for mystic objects during the Christian centuries are very slight, whereas the traces of occult association are exceedingly strong. The Mysteries of pre-Christian times were no doubt schools of mystic experience. Plato and Plotinus were assuredly mystics who were initiated in these schools. Unfortunately, the nature of the experiment has come down to us, for the most part, in a fragmentary and veiled manner. But, outside exoteric writings, it has in my belief come down, and it is possible to reconstruct it, at least intellectually and speculatively, for it is embedded in the symbolic modes of advancement practised by certain secret societies which now exist among us. A transmission of mystic knowledge has therefore taken place from the past, but the evidence is of an exceedingly complex nature and can scarcely be explained here. Nor is it necessary at the moment to our purpose, for western mysticism is almost exclusively the gift of the Church to the West, and the experiment of Christian mysticism, without any veils or evasions, is written at large in the literature of the Church. It may call to be re-expressed for our present requirements in less restricted language, but there is not really any need to go further. *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage*, and *The Castle of the Inward Man*, contain the root-matter of the whole process, whatever imperfections may inhere in their modes of presentation. I have also found it well and exhaustively described in obscure little French books which might appear at first sight to be simply devotional manuals for the use of schools and seminaries. I have found it in books equally obscure which a few decades ago would have been termed Protestant. Through all there is the same independent unanimity of experience and purpose which the alchemists have claimed for their own literature, and I have no personal doubt that the true mystics of every age and country constitute an unincorporated fellowship communicating continually together in the higher consciousness. They do not differ essentially in the East or the West, in Plotinus or in Gratry.

In its elementary presentation, the life of the mystic consists primarily in the detachment of the will from its normal condition of immersion in material things and in its redirection towards the goodwill which abides at the centre. This centre, according to the mystics, is everywhere, and is hence, in a certain sense, to be found in all; but it is sought most readily, by contemplation, as the centre of the man himself, and this is the quest and finding of the soul. If there is not an open door — an entrance to the closed palace — within us, we are never likely to find it without us. The rest of the experiences are those of the life of sanctity leading to such a ground of Divine Union as is possible to humanity in this life.

In the distinction—analogical, as already said—which I have here sought to establish, there lies the true way to study the lives of the mystics and of those who graduated in the schools of occult science. The object of that study, and of all commentary arising out of such lives, is to lead those, and there are thousands, who are so constituted as to desire the light of mysticism, to an intellectual realisation of that light. The life of the mystic belongs to the divine degree, and it would be difficult to say that it is attainable in the life of the world; but some of its joys and consolations—as, indeed, its trials and searchings—are not outside our daily ways. Apart from all the heroisms, and in the outer courts only of the greater ecstasies, there are many who would set their face towards Jerusalem if their feet were put upon the way—and would thus 'turn again home.'

THE ENTERPRISE OF SANCTITY

AN EX-PARTE STATEMENT

IF in the previous paper something by way of preliminary was said concerning the life of the mystic and the work which is involved by his vocation, there was no attempt to do more than furnish a few unofficial definitions and to institute one contrast in a case which is open to confusion. A consideration of the elementary and almost external issues is still the restriction of the moment, and the validity of the title which I have here chosen will scarcely be manifested except in the last part.

These are subjects which some years ago it would have been nearly impossible to discuss, as already noted, with any expectation of a hearing; but now, saving in the purlieus and 'low-life deeps' of thought, they will everywhere find an auditory, and in several quarters an increasing recognition that ultimately there are no other subjects. The received opinions of the past are not, indeed, without their consecration now, as at times previous to these; but the minds of the age are disposed towards new ways, which we have a poet's authority for saying that the world loves, and also to those others which are so old as to be for them new. It is even possible to speak of things which concern the philosophy and, perhaps, almost the practice of religion, from that standpoint which can be called universal because it embraces all, without being dependent on any of the official ecclesiastical systems. The standpoint in question, for the present purpose, cannot, of course, be devotional; it is intellectual and historical. It is in this way only that it can be appropriate, in the first instance, to offer the merely general reader some considerations, however unbiased, of that reflective system which is here termed transcendental or mystical, and even so it is nothing less than prudent and well-becoming to begin by assuring him that he is not addressed otherwise than as one who may be indifferently interested in such a field of thought, because in recent times it has received a certain vogue and is hence one of those topics of which an informed person may be assumed to know something slightly. At the same time, I have termed these remarks an *ex-parte* statement, that I may not deal ungenerously with the general reader, as it so happens that I have travelled a good distance along these uncommon paths of thought, and have got to know where they lead.

One critical writer, who had, however, very little sympathy with the subject of which he was treating, has told us that, strictly speaking, the transcendental sentiment in man has no history; it is an attitude, a condition of mind, a pathological state, if you will, common to certain temperaments in all places and at nearly all times. On the contrary, and from the alternative standpoint, that state or sentiment is coincident with the history of the human soul, which, from all time, and in all places, has striven towards the consciousness of its source, and has aspired to return whence it came. This desire and its passionate endeavour have, for the rest, been sufficiently objectified on the external plane to make them count for something not inconsiderably important in the world's history; and it is, practically, a commonplace, which, for the rest, does not specially concern us, that, in their lesser manifestations, at least, they have been almost invariably among the active phenomena heralding or accompanying great crises in the life of humanity; as, for example, at the dawn of the Christian era, at the beginning of the French Revolution, and, I may, perhaps, add, at the present day.

Now, it is desirable that we should make one or two further distinctions on the subject of mysticism—what it is and what it is not—quite clear to our minds, and more especially how it is to be understood as regards the Western world, with which we are exclusively concerned. I have pointed out in the previous study that we are apt to use words interchangeably which are either not interchangeable at all, or, if to some extent synonymous, they have been subjected, for more or less cogent reasons, to a conventional distinction which must bring ourselves and others into confusion if we come now to disregard it. But outside questions which belong to the meaning of words, certain lessons of experience teach other precautions, and, for example, that we must separate in our minds certain things from mysticism which are liable to be identified therewith. This paper may also be classed as an historical consideration, partly because it does follow a certain order of time and partly because it does deal, in a broad manner, with events in the history of the mind within the limits of its subject-matter. It is thus formally a protest against any attempt to minimise the importance of the mystic object because it is not, so it has been alleged, useful for historical purposes, in connection, let us say, with the constitutional history of England or the date of the Norman Conquest.

Before approaching Western Transcendentalism, I should like to set out with a distinction peculiar to myself; it is not of a flattering kind, for it is a distinction of ignorance. We are dealing, of course, with a subject which is essentially religious, and the sum of real religion, and I wish to show presently that all mysticism worthy of the title had, in the West, for many centuries its home and abiding-place within the sanctuaries of the Church. But I am not able to say whether there has been, since the division between the East and the West, any philosophical development of importance in the Greek Church. This is worth mentioning in passing as an instance of one of those important questions which might some day be cleared up by research. I speak, therefore, with a certain reservation, remembering that the subject generally, including its literature, is even in external and historical aspects, to adapt the words of Dean Stanley, behind the mountains of the ignorance of us all.

As concerns that which our knowledge may permit us to affirm of Western mysticism, up to the sixteenth or seventeenth century, it is almost wholly a heritage from the Church. This is not an adventitious statement, but a concise summary of an indisputable case. For the most part, I am speaking admittedly of a period when to differ from that organisation was frequently to incur a great risk, and there is no need to add that there was throughout it much smouldering hostility towards the central authority which occasionally burst up into flame. But it is necessary to say that such hostility was scarcely on the part of the mystics, nor can the doctrines and teachers that were from time to time condemned and persecuted be regarded as mystics, if we except such signal instances as Molinos and Fénelon. It is preferable to accentuate this, because one cannot help noting a tendency on the part of some writers in sympathy with transcendentalism to identify with mysticism every revolt against the ecclesiastical authority. As an example in point, we may, I think, take the case of Abelard. He was a liberal theologian of his period, and not in any sense a theosophist; but he clashed with his masters in theology, and partly on account of this opposition, and partly because of his brilliance, and, for the rest, by reason of the tragical episodes of his life, and in spite of its fatal legend of a none too mystic love, he has been somehow set down as a mystic. Let us, on our part, endeavour to avoid these mistakes of classification, and, in a certain sense, of prejudice. The case for the ecclesiastical character of mediæval mysticism in the Western world centres in the simple point that there was no other kind, and there is also no evidence that the mystics who illuminated the Church were in it and not of it. There is, indeed, as it seems to me, very full and direct evidence of the contrary, and that they did not, as is sometimes suggested, remain there from considerations of prudence, or otherwise against their will. The *via prudentiæ* which they studied had no relation to any time-serving and material discretion. They less than any, as the heroes of a strange enterprise of sanctity, would have been actuated by a mere question of personal safety.

Let us take three names in their order, Bernard, Ruysbroeck, and Tauler—names which are typical for our subject, standing for much that had gone before and much also that was to come after. If there is one thing which issues clearly from the many writings that they have each of them left us, it is that it is wholly untrue, as some have unthinkingly advanced, that these mystics were not faithful members of their Church, as that Church was understood by herself at their period, and not by the liberalising tendencies of modern thought, within or without its pale, seeking to explain the Church. In matters of doctrine and practice there was nothing that they held or did which differed from the orthodox practice or doctrine. We do not find Solomon's temple spiritualised, so to speak; dogma did not evaporate into allegory or transfigure into symbol, and the method of these thinkers was simply the method of accepted religious life, exalted to the heroic point. Furthermore, there is no trace of a secret doctrine, as we now understand this phrase, behind the official doctrine of the particular Church of which they remained the exponents upon a higher plane. A very serious mistake is being made at the present day by those who endeavour to identify obscure Manichæan and pseudo-Manichæan sects of Southern Europe with the disseminators of mysticism, and with the teachings and lives of mystics. It would seem as if hatred of the Church, and, if I understand the matter rightly, of all ecclesiastical Christianity, should be regarded as a test of transcendentalism, and as one of the true marks by which we may know it. The mistake to which I am adverting is not less indiscriminate in its details than it is baseless in its general notion. Albigensian or Vaudois, it matters not; if it is to be found in Southern Europe at a certain period, it receives the distinguished title of Manichæan, and if it loathes the yoke of the Church, it is part of the occult tradition; while if these sects were opposed by great doctors and shining lights of the Church, it was not through a sincere conviction that they were contrary to the truth, but because, for example, Saint Augustine had failed to attain the higher grades of the initiation which was dispensed by them. These points, and many others which might be mentioned, are illustrations, not of malice but rather of imperfect equipment and of uncritical adherence to biased or exploded authorities. No one acquainted with his subject would say that the Vaudois were either followers of Manes or esoteric philosophers, or seekers in this life for the attainment of the beatific vision; or that Peter Abelard, the Nominalist, who maintained that universals have no real existence outside the mind, must be classed with Ruysbroeck, Tauler, St. John of the Cross, and

Molinos, or even with Trithemius, Raymond Lully, Cornelius Agrippa, and Paracelsus.

It must be observed, in the next place, that there is no trace, doctrinal or otherwise, in the Christian mystics with whom we are here concerned of the existence of any secret Church, or of a Church within the Church. We shall come later on to the consideration of this claim, and as we shall find that the silence of the great mystics is, at first sight, a grave difficulty, I could wish to report that there are indications of this kind, but I have found none, and there is also no real attempt to get behind sacrament or doctrine. There is absolutely no reason to suppose that these mystics, or any others of whom they are typical representatives, made use of doctrine and sacrament by way of economy or symbol, except in the sense of the sacraments. The end of Western Mysticism was the return of the many into the One, and the means of that reunion did not differ from the lesser means of sanctification. They were, so to speak, the higher mathematics of the soul, and the last words of Ruysbroeck in the last chapter of the *Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage*, where he promises to those who can so prepare themselves by the pursuit of virtue, that out of the flesh, and, to some extent before it is set aside, they shall attain *in vastissimum divinitatis pelagus navigare*, are simply the formal guarantee of the last vital consequence in a closely knit chain of cause and effect, the first links of which are still to be found in all the elementary religious catechisms.

As this paper is explanatory and not polemical, and, in respect of the ecclesiastical system, is less than anything to be regarded as a confession of personal faith, I must not touch upon the question whether the Western Mystics were right in thus being content with their Church, and with its *summa totius theologiæ.* It will seem to the simple senses that if any of us are disposed to accept the Christian transcendentalism of this period as the best guide to the Transcendental Life, they should not, if they are logical, shrink from anything that follows reasonably from such disposition. The alternatives, however, are not of this clear kind, for the distinction between essences and accidents would intervene to cloud the issues. Happily my sole province is to record, at the fact's value, that the men who aspired to the possession of the essential unity by the way of fruition, and to attain the dilucid contemplation of the Trinity in Unity, did, without evasion, equivocation, or mental reservation of any kind, believe in Baptism, Confirmation, Repentance, the Holy Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony, yes—even in matrimony, as the outward sign of an inward grace, and, let us dare to trust, without any *arrière-pensée* in their mind to suggest that they considered it, like the young lady mentioned by Coventry Patmore, as rather a wicked sacrament. I must add also, that I may not spare the whole truth, that they believed in eternal punishment and in the resurrection of the body with the same firmness as in the life everlasting. On this whole question I cannot do better than refer my readers to the celebrated *Institutions* of Tauler, which treatise deals generally with the manner of returning to our first source, and with the transmutation of the human into the divine will, but is, at the same time, a method of preparation for receiving the Eucharist worthily.

Another point which assumes, in certain respects, an aspect of comparative magnitude is the question whether, positively or by implication, we can trace in these Christian thinkers any one of the modern transcendental speculations concerning the soul and its destiny. There is no opportunity here to go over the whole ground, but there is one of them which, I think, may be taken to stand for the rest, because it has entered more into the life of modern transcendentalism than, perhaps, any other that we can name. I refer to Reincarnation. This belief has had a chequered career in recent times; but not only is the Metempsychosis, in any of its forms, quite outside the horizon of early Christian mystics, but, by inference, at least, it seems impossible to their system. It is, of course, open to modern Theosophists, and others, to regard the experience of the Beatific Vision as belonging to the Devachanic Plane, or, in other words, not what it was thought by those who aspired to reach it, and did, in their belief, enjoy a certain foretaste of its ecstasy; about which I will only disclaim jurisdiction, admitting that, on his part, no Christian mystic would contend that Devachanic experience, if any, was, or is, an experience of the Beatific Vision.

If we were to follow the indication offered by this one doctrine into all paths, parallel and connected, we should reach a much clearer distinction between occultist and mystic than could reside in the variation of the words. The dual purpose of this brief excursus has, however, been reasonably served when it is added that, after all occult theorems and occult practical formulæ, there remains the true object which is external to these, and is that of the Western Mystic—*in vastissimum divinitatis pelagus navigare.* We can put it, if we please, in the words of the dying Plotinus: 'I take the Divine within me to the Divine in the universe.' And Christian Mystic or Grecian Philosopher, or Spanish Kabalist, putting the traditions of Israel into the great book of the Zohar, it is all one as regards the path to that object, which is wholly and simply, as the Zohar calls it, the path of ecstasy. If outside this union with the Divine and this state of 'still rest and of changeless simplicity' which bears uninterruptedly the consciousness of the whole Reality within it, there is any other mystic object, I do not know what it is.

That mysticism is not only a great but also an exact science would be assuredly one of my contentions, if it did not exceed the principles of exposition and of criticism already laid down in the preface as proper guides in a work which is the reverse of apologetic in its character; but here, at least, I have established one point, the exactitude of which remains above challenge. The history of the mystics is conclusive, and this absolutely, thereon; the literature is also conclusive, and books without number remain which any doubtful minds can at need consult. Upon any merely polemical consideration, that consultation is perhaps a little less than desirable, but there are better motives possible, and for those who possess them, in spite of certain impediments, it is not really and unreasonably difficult for any one to become at least acquainted with the rumours of the depths and the heights of mystical speculation. At present, I fear that the mystics are in the position of certain poets mentioned by Dr. Johnson, who were quoted but not read. Those who will be at the pains to read them will not, I think, look up from their pages without an overflowing conviction that, far removed from ordinary paths and interests, even in the domain of psychology, there is a grand experiment possible, and that some have achieved it.

So many misconceptions being possible, it is well to reiterate that the mystic life does not carry with it any dispensation from the churches. Some of them may seem, and some of them, I think, are more fully in consonance with that life, but it is because the lesser among the various academies have not so fully entered into their higher consciousness. Mysticism is, in one sense, like Kabalism; it is a liberal education in religion, as that was a liberal education in Israel; but the roots of the mystic subject are, in the last resource, as native to the Bethel as they are to the City of the Seven Hills.

THE SENSE OF THE INFINITE

AN undesigned divagation of reason has sought to expound spiritual law, not by the illuminating analogies of law in the natural world, but by an extension from the lower to the higher. It is unnecessary to enter the path of the saint and the mystic before we can recognise that it is Grace which explains Nature, or that the mystery of man is understood only in its junction with the mystery of God. This notwithstanding, and because of the analogy of things, it is no unprofitable course which at times takes us from the reflection on that which is above to the study of that which is below. Thus, in the consideration of mystic life and doctrine it is wise here and there to recur to our present environment and even to the spirit of the age which is a persistent part thereof. In pursuance of this notion, let us realise that if the multiplication of interests can truly be shown to increase the value of life, then it must be confessed that the last hundred years have added almost incalculably to the goodwill of human industry, regarded as a going concern. It has become almost trite to say that every department of activity is nowadays highly specialised in view of these interests, and tends to become further divided and subdivided. The minute philosopher and practitioner are called for more and more, and such higher mental abilities as are qualified for the profession of the specialist, in whatever department of effort, are not likely to lie idle or to go without their reward for many generations to come. Knowledge adds to the complexities of civilisation, and civilisation, as it increases its complexities, makes further demand upon knowledge. We have really very little need to ask, if we are concerned in such matters, what we shall do with the more intelligent and capable of our children, whether boys or girls. The answer might well be: Train them for specialists in that subject wherein you observe that their interest has been awakened, or along the lines of which it seems possible to awaken their interest. The departments are innumerable; they are all wage-earning, and in many of them there are high rewards possible. Naturally, they lie outside the common fields of the educational curriculum; they are not comprised in the classical or commercial course; but education itself, as it rises to meet the demand for particular and extraordinary knowledge in given directions, will tend to become specialised, as it is indeed already tending. Outside the practical advantage that knowledge means daily bread, there is one of a higher order, since it is purely intellectual. The field of discovery is always in front of the specialist, and he can scarcely fail to enter its promised land, by whatever path he travels. He is ever on the threshold of that unknown which is also for ever passing into the known and acquired. There is, however, unfortunately another side to the picture. The eye which looks in one direction only, loses sight of the wide horizon; the mind which works solely upon a single department of knowledge, loses the greater issues; and it is to this extent an open question whether the multiplication of interests has added capital value to life, or has simply split up its investments, the return on which, moreover, must depend upon the interests themselves, and these are too often depreciating securities, or short leases with heavy repairing covenants.

The speculative question, in any case, is not without importance at this day, when side by side with the specialisation of knowledge, of research, and of industry, there are found also increasing convictions that man's highest concerns do not lie in these directions. In the old times of the schoolmen there were those who argued from particulars to universals, following what was then called the Aristotelian method, and there were those who argued from universals to particulars, which they used to call the Platonic method. These two classes find their representatives even in the modern spirit of this twentieth century, and by taking a glance at the age as it is, it may be possible to forecast somewhat broadly and very roughly, bearing these two tendencies in mind, how matters are likely to stand in respect of them after the lapse of another hundred years.

There is a safe assumption at the outset, and this is that in those fields which are now licensed for research, the gigantic tasks have been already achieved; in science, in literature, in art the statement holds equally. The possibilities of differentiation are infinite, but the great things have been discovered, and, within limits, they have been said as well as done. To affirm this is not to put a limit upon human capacity, by which I mean in the known fields, but to define the unavoidable bounds of the existing order of things. Once and for all—unless another flood could again reduce the race to the unit of a single family and all knowledge perish in the catastrophe—earth and sea have had their Christopher Columbus, and the new world cannot be discovered for a second time. It is more than probable that the North Pole will be reached before this century has passed, and he who reaches it will be counted among the immortal adventurers; but he will not be so great a discoverer as Columbus, though the latter's task was infinitely more simple, because his success means less to the world. In a word, earth and sea have been so far reduced within the province of our knowledge that all further explorations are necessarily of secondary importance, and in two or three generations it seems reasonable to suppose that nothing worth speaking of will remain to be done in this direction; yet the differentiation and specialisation of our knowledge in every corner of the world will, of course, go on indefinitely.

In all departments of science the same stage appears to have been reached, subject to one important qualification. The surface of the globe is so well known that there is no reason why it should not ultimately be explored from end to end, but along the broad tracks of the general sciences a certain great progress brings us to limits which the human mind cannot overstep. Biology, for example, is practically a creation of the nineteenth century, but some brilliant discoveries notwithstanding, it may yet prove that its irremovable landmarks have been established, its great discoveries made, and though enormous differentiation is still possible, and innumerable byways are still open to research, the mystery of life has been pursued in one sense to its source, to the point, that is to say, where we lose it, at that beginning for which we cannot account and which bids fair to remain unaccountable, because it is the secret of the King and is therefore unsearchable, except in the Palace of the King. In astronomical observation, to take another instance, the great fields are explored and the additions to the stock of knowledge accumulated from year to year, though highly important in their own degree, are of the nature of minutiæ and do not materially assist towards a better theory of the stellar universe; while as regards those fields of investigation which lie outside the rectification and extension of the star-maps, here also the tendency is to recognise, reluctantly enough, the approach of knowledge to those limits at which the word Impassable is written. However widely distinguished in themselves, the other sciences convey the same message: there is no important outlook in mathematics; in physiology, the barriers rise up everywhere; even in chemistry it is doubtful, should a further disintegration of substances previously regarded as elementary enable us to convert one metal into another, whether this would be regarded as a really great discovery in view of the science as it stands. It is, nevertheless, in the domain of the chemist, if anywhere, and in the investigation of the latent and concealed forces of the universe, that the great hope of official invention lies.

That which is true of science seems true also of literature, of history, of religion—understood in their ordinary senses—and of the field of speculation which assumes to itself in a more particular manner the name of philosophy.

No questioning of culture would elicit an expectation of another Homer or of a second Shakespeare; as literary monuments the scriptures of Jewry and Christendom are so great that a right instinct regards them—outside all theological considerations—as not only for their own age but all time, and this in such a manner that time is unlikely to produce their parallel. At this period in particular we are not in the day of great names, but in that of differentiation and specialisation of literary gifts, with a highly increased standard of average talent everywhere; while round about the horizon of literature the old Titans loom impassable as those barriers which say to the biologist, the astronomer, the chemist: Thus far shalt thou go and no farther. If other records of the past be challenged, it will be found that as little hope of great things to come is cherished by the historian, although the yearning eye may be turned to Lhassa of Thibet for treasures still unearthed, and the heart still hope for something, so far undemonstrable, in the land of the Pharaohs. The voices of the records are in all men's ears; they have been made to speak everywhere; but beyond this there is the dumbness of the great unknown, which looks so mournfully unknowable. There is, however, that lesser unknown, ever responding to research and multiplying minute knowledge in the hands of particular investigation—like other specialities, highly important in its way, profoundly interesting, but offering nothing to the intellectual notion of greatness. If we touch for the moment upon matters of religion in those aspects which lie outside the region of its divine sanction, it becomes thus a part of history, a part of literature, a domain of criticism, a controversial region, a science of the higher laws of conduct, the principles and limits of which have been fixed long ago, leaving only departmental issues, but these innumerable, in which it is possible to create new epochs. Around the whole horizon of these issues, far above and beyond them, stand the giants which were on earth in those days, the great theologians, the great commentators, the great controversialists, and—may it be respectfully added?—the great saints of old, to compel reverence if they do not inspire obedience or engage assent, and to offer an overwhelming assurance that the force of soul can scarcely further go. It would seem almost idle to mention a second time that arrogant word philosophy, because the mantle of this Elijah has not passed to any later servants; but avoiding the enumeration of names, and admitting that important schools of thought have originated in the last two centuries, the highest tribunal of ultimate appeal can only confirm the judgment of the mere wayfaring man, that on all the great speculations the schools of thought change, but the problems remain, and that the root-questions are unanswerable in those academies which dispense the admitted degrees.

It follows, therefore, that the concerns of the age are fixed all along the lesser lines for at least a century to come; that they will go on multiplying, and that discovery and increase of knowledge will be incessant within these limits. It follows also that as in science, understood in its widest and most embracing sense, so in literature, the production will increase; that good books will multiply as the average of talent rises; but that in either case the great sum of interest and real value does not stand towards appreciation, and it is questionable whether this outlook offers real consolation to the mind. An inexpensive process for the extraction of radium so that it may be utilised for domestic purposes might be an immense convenience; the cure of cancer and consumption a great amelioration for a suffering section of humanity; the discovery of the bases of gold very interesting and possibly highly valuable, even if it upsets the currency; and since these few instances may be taken to stand for thousands, let it be asked: What next, Muse of Science, and what for the twenty-first century? Or, if nothing next, what then? So also, if Egypt permits her explorers to disinter still earlier dynasties; if Buddhist monasteries lift up some corner of the veil which covers the mysteries of the East; if the remnants of an undreamed-of civilisation are found in Australasia; if another Gospel should be discovered; if the exact area of the circle should no longer baffle mathematics; if some new motion should be distinguished in the solar system; if psychology should establish some of the disputed points in mental philosophy; will it not still be true that 'knowledge comes but wisdom lingers' and that the path of these particulars, these details, wonderful as they may be, is not the path which leads to the things that are universal, while it is these only in the last resource which lend value to life and can alone be added to the abiding heritage of man?

Now if this be so, the great question which arises is whether there is another way, for an answer to which, if indeed there be an answer possible, recourse must be had to the ground of those convictions previously mentioned, that man has other interests which are quite distinct from anything that is attained or attainable by the faculties of external observation. In the nature of things these convictions are not open to experimental demonstration by the way of physical science.

They baffle empirical psychology in the same way that the ultimate nature of life baffles the biologist, but they exist as life exists, and they are older than the prophecies of Isaiah, the religious epics of India, or the Egyptian Book of the Dead. They are precisely that element which constitutes the greatness of Plato in philosophy; of the fourth gospel, as it can be appraised by the literary sense; of Dante and Spenser in poetry; of St. Thomas in theology; of Jeremy Taylor in personal religion; of Francis Bacon at his highest, though essentially he was an experimental philosopher; and, despite the apparent jumble of this enumeration, of certain old books of knight-errantry and other mirrors of the romantic spirit. But if this element has found its expression thus diversely in literature, it is no less evident in Gothic architecture; in the early Italian masters; and in such 'great tone poets' as Sebastian Bach. The ground of the conviction must not be understood as religion in the conventional meaning of the word, and yet it can be defined only as the sense of the infinite. It is the deficiency of this sense which has taken greatness out of modern poetry and once at least reduced the modern novel to an involved study of character, of situation, and of manners. It is the sense of this deficiency and the desire of this lost consciousness which have brought about the revival of romanticism in literature. It is the realisation of the truth that man does not live by bread alone, and that for the same reason his mental nourishment does not or should not consist exclusively of facts; that he is not really better or worse for the discovery of a new star in the constellation *Lyra*, or for the household adaptation of radium; and that the prevention of cancer and consumption, though an enormous safeguard for his body, will not really console his heart.

But if the ground of this conviction, that there are better things possible than the providence of science can confer, is to be sought in the sense of the infinite, by the presence of which some men and women have been great in all ages and have left imperishable monuments, does it not seem to follow that there is a side of consciousness which calls for cultivation, and has been neglected amidst the rapid methods and specialisation of modern life? Man in the last resource is that which he thinks; he grows wicked by thinking evil, but if he thinks that which is good, the good fills him entirely. And if amidst the multiplication around him of all those pressing yet lesser interests which make modern life so complex and so differentiated, he can learn how to detach himself occasionally and revert to the things which are simple and not differentiated; if in the crowded city he can remember the great world; if he can embrace the larger interests which are not of one age but of all time, will he not, amidst the full appreciation of all that science and research have effected in his temporal interest, and the full enjoyment of their utilitarian benefits, gain something also of that larger consciousness, that contact with things immeasurable, which gave us Plato and Dante? There will in this way be effected a certain marriage between the interests which are universal and the interests which are particular, and seeing that at the beginning of the twentieth century the want of some such union is finding a voice everywhere, is written everywhere in our literature, our painting, our music, and finds a dumb expression even in our painful reproduction of Gothic architecture, it is not a rash forecast to affirm that the twentieth century will accomplish it, and that art and thought and letters will receive the new voice which they are certainly demanding.

These considerations might stand as irremovable prolegomena to any exposition of mysticism. It should be remembered, by way of conclusion, that the investments to which I have referred are nearly all subject to forfeiture because the only inalienable title-deeds are those which we can take into eternity; that the exhausted greatness of discovery is only in respect of the outside world, his avocations in which have left man always on the threshold of his soul as at the gates of an untraversed world; that the things which remain over to say embrace the unrealised secrets which are within; that it is well to know earth and sea, because when we have exhausted these there remains that hidden cosmos wherein is the rest for the people of God; that the disillusion of Alexander was owing to a limited horizon; that the mystery of life becomes simple in the mystery of God; that astrology is probably a vain science, but as a matter of experimental research it is of more importance and not more vain than the conventional study of the stars, the general history of which tends to justify the criterion of Edward Young that 'the undevout astronomer is mad'; and that a theory of the stellar universe does not ultimately matter at all. Now, here are paradoxes intentionally, but they make it possible to add what is intended in all seriousness, namely, that we have learned a great deal of externals, and having thereby multiplied our solicitudes as well as our material conveniences and sureties, it is opportune at length, if indeed it be also practicable, to take another way. One poet has recognised in all nature a disguised humanity, and has said further: 'All that interests a man is man.' But we look for another who will dare to tell us that all which interests a man ought to be God, because outside the Divine there are ultimately no interests for humanity, if that which we brought into the world should have at any time its part again in God.

SUPERNATURAL GOODNESS

THE authority of all authority has announced to us that any search after goodness outside God is a vain quest, because He alone is good. If such is the construction placed by the Divine Master upon the claim of those natural amenities which it is customary to class with goodness, we shall be justified in looking at the whole subject more closely than is possible in any summary allusion or discursive paper. If we may set aside for a moment the conventional urbanities of polite education, and may venture to affirm what is not in reality disputed by those who have a title to think independently of the conventions in question, namely, that, taken even at their own valuation, the characteristic of ethics is insufficiency, we shall have done something already to liberate human thought by opening up wider issues than the considerations of morality can afford. The bare statement is liable, however, to certain grave misconceptions on the part of hasty minds, which will be apt to conclude that the insufficient is also the ineffectual. If they are told, for example, that there is very little trace in the universe of what used to be understood in the old arguments by the conception of moral order, they will suppose that it must be governed alternatively merely by blind fatality. If they learn further that the theological doctrine of requital, the system of conventional recompense and punishment, lapses with the notion of moral order, they will assume, on their own part, that human conduct is a matter of indifference, carrying no personal consequence, and that the decalogue has passed into abeyance. One crudity is thus replaced by another in minds of this type, for which leading-strings are necessary, because the moment they cease to be controlled by the stipulations of right conduct, they are goaded by the pure freneticism of passion. The truth is that the fundamental laws of morality are more vital in their importance the more fully we recognise the final inadequacy of any simple doctrine of conduct or any general rule imposed upon civilised conscience. Such inadequacy does not arise from the fact that, being common to the whole world, they are of necessity commonplace in character, and by their familiarity have become platitudes in expression, though it is part of our burden that the obvious and the familiar are sources of great weariness and intellectual dejection. It follows rather from the fact that, look as we may upon the brighter side of being, hope as we can for the future, believe as we do, not alone in the actual and latent worthiness of human life, but that we came at the beginning from afar and that in the end we return afar, it remains that, as a race, we have fallen short of the most restricted ideal, and that, therefore, human conduct stands in need of a more powerful motive than any which is provided by the simple moral law. This law endeavours to ensure, firstly, harmonious correspondence with an accepted standard which abides in the general conscience; secondly, the intellectual development which accompanies the progress of knowledge; and, thirdly, that amelioration of the conditions of existence which is understood by sociological science. Thus, by a natural method, 'devoid of haste and violence,' and at work on the physical plane, it would give man at his best to the world. Because insufficiency is written upon the face of these things, they are not less necessary as titles and warrants for every postulant for admission to the mountain of God.

In one form or another a motive more powerful than morality has always been present in the world, and this, under the name of religion, has insisted on an excellence which is other than moral goodness, standing thereto, perhaps, in the same relation that genius bears to talent. Fixing its intentions at once upon man's higher nature, it endeavours to accomplish its objects by producing a harmonious correspondence between God and the human soul; by ensuring the soul's progress in the immediate knowledge of God; by a transfiguration of the conditions of existence through the suspension of correspondence with inferior things; and by the establishment of higher correspondences—which is the aim of transcendental life. It is, in a word, the assonance of conscious being upon the inward side. In the ideological world the conceptions within and without suppose one another: so also the evolution of the physical and intellectual man cannot proceed if the perfection of the soul be ignored, and the soul's growth is impossible with an undeveloped or deteriorating physical instrument. It is only at the great heights that this instrument ceases to hold an office, and so falls gradually away.

At the same time the religious motive, more powerful as it is claimed than ethics, has, like ethics, failed to accomplish its purpose so far as the race is concerned. It cannot be said that this failure must be ascribed to the fact that the two have not worked in conjunction, for it is only of late years that there has been an attempt of a methodical kind to divide them and accomplish the secularisation of morals, or, in other words, the reduction of insufficiency to suspension. On the contrary, the religious motive has insisted without variation upon the moral basis, but this insistence and that conjunction, which should have been the source of strength, have, perhaps, been the secret of the failure. The reason is, that the nature of the correlation has been misconstrued; morality is not the groundwork of religion, but true religion is the foundation and philosophical motive of morality. The misconstruction can be most easily realised by one of its most simple summaries, as, for example, that 'the pure in heart shall see God.' In the merely natural order the statement seems notoriously untrue; the reference, however, is not to any natural condition of negative innocence, but to the attainment of that spiritual state which on the inward side yields the Divine Vision, and on the outward ensures purity of heart as a consequence. In other words, we cannot work up from Nature to that which is supernatural, but the supernatural is so extended as to include all that is good and gracious in Nature, while it maintains and ameliorates it continually, bringing it by degrees to perfection after its own kind.

The object of religion is the development and perfection of humanity by a series of spiritual processes, and its union with what is highest in the universe, while morality proposes the amelioration of the race with the assistance only of natural law. Religion has so far failed because it has only imperfectly realised its own pre-eminence, and morality for want of an adequate recognition of spiritual law. We must know God in order to be good, but no moral goodness can bring us to divine knowledge. It follows that the Churches, as the official teachers of religion, so far from reaching their term, have not as yet entered into their true patrimony; that their higher function is before them; and that the world at large needs them, and at this moment, more strenuously than in the past.

Whether to the messages of history or to the living facts of the age in which we move and are—wheresoever we turn, we see everywhere about us the energies of a force which makes for advancement. We see everywhere an outward and inward a collective and individual struggle towards a higher state. But we have also to confess the presence of retrogressive forces and, further, of those negative forces which retard or arrest development. If we take for a moment the conventional view of evolution as it is construed by official science, that law would appear to have proceeded along its path of progress till, in the process of development itself, certain factors were introduced with which it had ultimately to reckon, namely, human consciousness, reason, and free will. When these appeared, something was introduced into the sequence which could set itself against the law and arrest progress, if it chose, in that department of Nature. The cross and retrogressive currents thus put in motion are not to be identified with the simple inertia which man, in common with other forms of existence, would naturally oppose to the progressive agencies at work within and without him. He has operated against his development instead of co-operating therewith; and this constitutes what one old transmigrationist, Glanvil, has termed the grand mystery of sin and evil. To cope with this tendency the moral law has arisen, among other forces, and up to a certain point it assists us to fulfil the higher law of our being. But, after all that has been advanced to the contrary by the casuistry of some emancipated minds, the sanction of moral law is in the divine law, for which reason it does not rest on any foundation of its own, nor can it, on the other hand, offer a substantial ground to religion. We need, therefore, to reverse all the processes of the past. Philosophical religion is no matter of faith, interpreted as intellectual assent to the clauses of a formal creed, or as a subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles of Association adopted by a particular Church; it is of experiment and experience. It has been said, as we have seen, that no man is good, but God alone, and it is only in so far as the religious experience advances us in the divine knowledge that we begin to grow into that supernatural goodness which includes in its larger dimension the restricted, dependent, and temporal sphere of ethics.

These considerations would be only in the nature of special pleading if religion could not be regarded as a practical science which obtains its results as surely as any physical science by the application of its proper formulæ. It is this scientific, philosophical, and, at the same time, transcendental religion which should be set at the basis of morals for their support and their sanction, and it is summed up in the single doctrine that there is a way to the knowledge of God. As the rose out of the rude mountain, so may issue from the formless nature of the man of earth, in the light of that knowledge, the many-petalled flower of the restored soul; so gradually and slowly unfold all potencies, like petals from within. As the milk-white blossoms of the acacia are put forth successively till the branch is covered and weighed down, so from one root and one stock are the powers of the interior and the centre developed externally, from the grace within to the natural goodness without. As the life of the young pelicans of legend was sustained by the resources of the parent bird, so our exterior forces and graces are fed from the spirit within; so from the spirit within is sustained the conduct of the outward man. And that which is inward and sustaining is our larger part, while the old oracles have told us that he who is within is older than he who is without.

A QUESTION OF SERVICE

AS it is not every one who saith: Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, so it is not every high allusion, whether in philosophy or poetry, which, for that reason, has any office in the mystic life. With an intellectual licence which by some minds might be held to exhaust the entire privilege of the poet and to infringe even on the ecclesiastical prerogative of the indulgence, Matthew Arnold gives permission in one of his poems to leave the Cross, if necessary, as we have left the idols of the Gentiles, but he counsels us to 'guard the fire within.' By putting to heart this recommendation as a kind of golden rule in conduct, several people at least of the present day have contrived, for the rest, to remain apart, 'holding no form of creed,' and perhaps contemplating all with a tolerance which is not unmingled with impatience. A certain looseness and indetermination of culture has increased our capacity for discerning superficial analogies to which no great consequence attaches, and by which we are assisted, it may be, even disposed, to miss the actual and vital relations. We 'sit and play with similes,' which is pleasant and easy; in current thought, in books, in Nature, and in so much of the things of Grace as we may be prepared to acknowledge, we recognise with fatal facility suggestions almost innumerable, but the real consanguinities are too deep for us. We do not see, for example, that to 'guard the fire within' is a direction which does not differ essentially from some old ordinances which have claimed, and have been allowed in the past, a more sacred authorisation than his who has told us, at some far away distance, how 'The Master sat upon the mount and taught.' As a guide of conduct, it is not more valid or wholesome than that which would persuade us to let our light so shine before men that they may glorify the source of all light. Moreover, the 'new commandment' which Matthew Arnold has given us may appear on reflection to lack one saving quality which belongs to the older ordination; it does not involve that passage from subject to object which is necessary for man in the measure of his ordinary stature, if only to show him that he does not stand alone either in his salvation or his loss. It is true that there are certain states of consciousness which have been descried by philosophy wherein there is no such passage; it is true that they are very high states; and it is true, further, that man, when he has reached them, does, in respect of humanity, appear to stand alone. He is neither under the old nor under the new law, but is subject to that rule of which it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive. These states are, however, outside the field intended to be covered by the recommendation of Matthew Arnold, which is a recipe for enabling a cultured person to rescue from the shipwreck of his faith a certain salvage, on the proceeds of which he may subsist without being actually starved or frozen to death. Failing this,

> 'Each will have one anguish—his own soul
> Which perishes of cold.'

It is not, therefore, a recipe for the benefit of man in the heights, but for man in his normal environment, with a certain example to set and a certain duty of transmission on the intellectual side to his children. As a rule of life, the older instruction is the better, because it provides what is here called the passage from subject to object; it directs us to guard the fire within, that the light of it may shine before men. It will continue to be chosen in preference by those who believe that among the first intentions of personal goodness is the design of being good to others. It embodies the reasonable altruism which is the proper corrective of the impassioned and hysterical self-sacrifice, for the sake of self-sacrifice, which is preached by some devotees, and even practised occasionally, in spite of the law and the order. To these the poet's injunction has, of course, never been commended, and its suggested alternative may not have fared much better, because, in place of flame and perfervour, it is moderate and sweetly reasonable, and because, like Matthew Arnold, it implies that the first consideration is to save one's own soul alive. That of his brother, Arnold tells us, no man is able to save, which at once divorces altruism from the most momentous field of its activity and disqualifies its apology in chief.

This point connects with the subject in hand more closely than may appear on a first reference. Arnold's precept concerning the inward guardianship is imperfect precisely because it rests upon this his other dogma, against which the true order, the universal experiences, and the right analogies cry out with one voice. Not only is man continually saving both the souls and the bodies of his brethren; not only is all rule of manifest goodness and loving-kindness grounded on this fact, but even that extreme view of the subject which is embodied in the idea of vicarious atonement has the whole creation for its witness. That is to say, the entire system of animate nature is founded on the vicarious sacrifice of one to another and of all to all. It is only in the human kingdom and in those kingdoms which are above it that this involuntary and inevitable renunciation becomes an expiation, an atonement, a willing sacrifice.

It should be remembered, however, that if man must make an offering of himself, it is not less essential that he must not throw himself away. If in the last resource he loses his life for others, it is in order that he may find his life, not that it may be wasted. It is a question not of suicide but of service, and the highest quality of this service, like other institutes of universal chivalry, is not without an honourable and scrupulous regard for the consideration and dignity of him who offers it. It is in his own person, as a fact, that the service and the sacrifice must first begin, lest it should become of no account. Before a man can do real good in the world he must have learned the great secret of his own healing. That is a very good maxim which says: 'Be the eye of the blind, and the arm of the poor, and the stick of the aged, and God shall give you a master-key of the life of man.' But the final object after all is the possession of the key; the race is not entirely without some consideration of the crown; the legendary hero may cast himself all armed into the abyss, but he has at least the design of filling it. Those who argue otherwise overshoot their mark because they outstep their measure. It follows, therefore, that a man's first concern is with himself. We may express it how we will; we may call it the care for our own salvation, or the sacrifice of ourselves to ourselves for the purgation of our coarser part, but, in either case, we must be enkindled before we can give light. Therefore, Arnold's mandate is a right and just one, and it is eternally just and right, but it falls short of perfection because it falls short of fruition, and is one side only of the equation of human life, which is found more perfectly in the older precept, contained in a threefold division—one, that the light must shine from within us; two, that it must shine before men, that they also may shine in their turn; and three, that the final consideration is neither the glory of the one nor the service of the other, but is ostensibly extrinsic and separate; the third act of the mystery is transferred outside of humanity, to that region where the passage from subject to object becomes suspended because it is the repose of both. And herein lies the secret of all high ruling in conduct and the ultimate redemption of ethics, by the transfer of the final consideration, which lies no longer either between man and himself, or between man and man, but between universal humanity, under all aspects of individualism and solidarity, and that which is the term of all, as it is also the source of all.

In these reflections, somewhat solicitously sustained, a few matters have perhaps been suggested which do not otherwise lie openly on the surface of the contrasted maxims of conduct, at least for those who think lightly, and it may occur to some on reflection that one or two old teachings suffer rather than gain by their later restatements, and that while it is possible to extend the interpretations, it is not wise to vary the text of the discourses. This is only another way of saying what perhaps can be stated more obviously, if that is indeed an advantage, namely, that we are scarcely in need of new maxims of conduct within the conventional limits any more than of new doctrines, but rather of a better understanding of old doctrines and maxims. And this understanding lies to some extent, though not fully or exactly, outside the logical processes, entering through other avenues by which the catholic life of transcendent Nature is communicated to the mind as the first working of that law of integration in virtue whereof the soul of man, after many morganatic marriages, enters at last into the royal union.

ASCETICISM AND MYSTICISM

AS it is necessary in the last resource to distinguish between the elections and the dedications of the mystic life and that which has been conventionally termed an interest in the claims of mysticism, or a predilection towards the literature of the mystics; as between the two classes represented by these leanings there is that other and very large class with whom the spirit is weak but willing, and the world strong; it seems desirable to say something which will not be set aside by those who, receiving the call, have obeyed it, and which yet may assist the others who have turned in their hearts towards Zion, at however great a distance. I suppose it must be admitted that there are people for whom a conception of the mystic life is more hopeless than speaking with tongues; they might less improbably raise the dead than enter themselves into life. They are not of necessity ignorant or even unintellectual; they may fill high offices in their particular sphere, but the world is closed within them more utterly than is the world without to one who is congenitally blind. Accepting them at their best, mentally and otherwise, they are rather in the position of the man who has become rich without the personal qualifications to support it. We know that enormous revenues may gild artificially and externally, but we know also that the peasant is still a peasant, and that the swine are still the swine. These also have otherwise their uses, as those have to whom the avenues of spiritual perception are sealed by a limitation of their nature. Experience, I think, teaches that the latter class are not so large as the initial lessons of association would seem to indicate, while there are certainly many who late in life may begin to learn the alphabet, and this is good, though they may never be able to read. What is much more important is that the weakness of the will, already mentioned, although it signifies incapacity, does not in any sense mean absence of faculty. It is certainly incapacity which finds the world too strong for all the high intention; that environment is strong enough and it is also insistent enough, but it is just because of the world that the soul is able to attain. The city is not less Jerusalem because the hills stand round it, and, when all has been said, the world is not so much our hindrance as a material to be adapted for our ends; it is indeed no hindrance at all in the sense that is usually attributed to it. But let us take it at all that it is worth, making every concession that is needful to excuse the disabilities of weakness, and let us also acknowledge that there are impediments which seem outside what is understood by the world, as, for example, that there are barriers to sanctity which arise out of the notions of sanctity. By this means we may come into contact at once with this middle class which I have mentioned—that class which confesses to a peculiar attraction towards the inward life—which acknowledges within it a certain quality of desire, which is in part at least conscious of a faculty designed for ministration to this desire. Such persons fail, however, in the attainment of any mystic term, even of the intellectual order, and there are two reasons—firstly, because they meet the difficulties of environment more than half way; and secondly, because they regard themselves as constitutionally unable to lead that kind of mystic life which alone is supposed to give knowledge of mystic doctrine, that is to say, a vital and personal knowledge as distinct from a literary conversance or a simple persuasion of mind.

Now, without speaking dogmatically upon a point which is mystically far too important for any new views even to be lightly tolerated, it is possible to say something which may be helpful to minds of this tendency. It is possible, in the first place, to say something which, though it is not the keynote of the present paper, may lead up to the keynote. Within the sanctuary of the Latin Church, during sacrificial celebration, there is, in addition to the celebrant in chief, a large concourse of inferior ministers, of whom some perform an extremely unimportant part, yet each of them fulfils a function to him assigned, and all are necessary for the complete development of the sacred pageant. The office of the Crucifier or Acolyte is even generically distinct from that of the High Priest, but both enter into the public ministry, and, although it is in every respect a perilous quotation, we may remember in this sense that 'they also serve who only stand and wait.' The peasant torch-bearer who appears at the consecration and departs at the *benedictus qui venit*, supposing him to be devout and recollected, is serving God at His altar no less than the Cardinal Archbishop or the Pope himself, and this because each in his own degree is fulfilling his part in that sphere of ecclesiastical duty to which it has pleased God to call him. There would be no office for the Sacristan if there were no priestly office, but the Sacristan is necessary to the Priest; so in the life of the mystic, and in the interior service which constitutes the mystic life, there are duties of order and degree; and even as it is a normal practice in the Latin Church for laymen to serve in the sanctuary, so within the mystic chancel it is not needful that all who are called to reception shall become epopts of the mystery, or even in this life consciously on the road to the mystic term. There are consecrations of life and thought, an interior attitude, a direction of spiritual aspiration, an obedience to spiritual promptings, which are essential to every mystic, but by these a man may be vitalised and yet may live in the world, not in any sense isolated, not here and now expecting the divine union; and so living, from the highest mystic standpoint, he may be doing a good and that his proper work, not for himself alone but for many who are around him. If any one is therefore called by some inherent desire to look towards the Zion of the Blessed, he has no need to hesitate because, for any reason, he may appear otherwise prohibited from the greater things. If there were not in the intellectual attitude, already named, even in the simple and perhaps ungoverned interest, a reward in itself, for example such a reward as the pupil of the school of philosophy finds in his scheme of the universe, there is perhaps no need to say that there would be no phase of mystic life on this planet at all. The illumination which follows from doctrine and the consciousness of the heights which are opened out to aspiration can be enjoyed, according to the measure of their interior stature, by many men and women who have nothing within them which would respond to the great counsels of perfection.

But, in the second place, there is what has been termed above an intellectual difficulty which hinders certain people. In the old literature of Christian sanctity, and in some at least of its latest developments, they find the notion of spiritual progress connected with some advanced type of asceticism, by which alone the neophyte,

> 'His soul well-knit and all his battles won,
> Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.'

But the whole spirit of the age has long since agreed to set aside asceticism as one of the errors of religious enthusiasm; and though in a matter of this kind a concession to the spirit of the age carries with it a suggestion of unwisdom, there is yet sufficient efficacy in the sentiment to command a specific assent. I mean to say that man has come, and correctly on the whole, to see that it is not a religious act to practise barbarism on his body, and that he is not approximating towards the Divine by despising, hating, and applying inconsiderate epithets to the physical environment with which he has been endowed in his exile. That environment is the temple of a holy presence and not the prison of a malefactor; but, supposing it to be the prison of a malefactor, there does not seem a reasonable purpose in destroying or even defacing the house of the criminal. The reason is that the changes which are begun from without and the measures which have their province externally are of no account in the processes of the inward school, for they begin at the wrong side of the subject. The soul which is seeking its native term of attainment and the fulfilment of that destiny to which from all time the soul alone has been called, has already its proper path assigned to it, and will in its own advancement carry with it into all necessary reconstruction whatever burdens belong to it at this present time. If the body is the cross of the soul, that is an old truth which long ago told us to carry the cross willingly, that in the end it may carry us. It is by such an ascent of

Calvary, and so alone, that the cross, whatever it is, becomes ultimately glorified.

There is no doubt that every man who is dedicated to the mystic life must, as a part of that dedication, forsake what is termed sin, though he will scarcely be guided by the specific motives which obtain in the simple conduct of life. There is also no doubt that this abandonment signifies, in a certain restricted sense, the life of the ascetic; but here the term is understood rationally and not in any instituted sense. The eradication of evil from our nature can never be a painless process; but after all it is an operation which has its roots in our interior side, and is not to be confused with such asceticism of the external class as was practised, for example, by Marianna of Geso, whose life has been described as 'nothing but one unbroken series of the most startling austerities, which make us shudder at the inventive cruelty which they display.' The dispensation of this kind of asceticism as an aid to religious progress seems to be passing away even within the precincts of the Latin Church, and if it really contributed in the soul's development towards the mystic end, that time too, it may be hoped, has also gone by. This is not to say, or at least in a decisive manner, that the process has never been useful in the past, or that one should speak of it slightingly now if the period of its utility has elapsed. What is no longer necessary is too commonly regarded as having been always unreasonable. In these, as in the other ministries, we have to remember that the soul has entered into its rest not only by more than one path but by all paths that are open, including many byways and some particular roads which at first sight might look as if they led to destruction. We have further to remember, and this also in the past perhaps more than in these days, that the first matter on which the mystery of Christ was put to work in the world was largely an animal matter, and that the religious animal, although he has been brought under the rule, is, by reason of that rule, superstitious, dogmatic, sectarian, intolerant, persecuting. When man, so limited, set out after the Divine Union, he felt called to avenge terribly the inadequacies of his own nature before he could expect to make progress. It would be unsafe, perhaps, to say, in any extended sense of the words, that we are now eradicating the animal man, but in a measure we are perhaps civilising him, and we have reached that point at least when it may be allowed that the race more generally has travelled some little distance nearer to the Divine by the mediation of kindness and charity, together with all the other softening influences of our increasing complexity of life. If there was ever, therefore, an ascetic rule of mysticism which could not then be abrogated, we can now regard it as a mitigated rule, much as the high grades of Masonry, having once established the Rite of the Strict Observance, at some later day modified it by the Lax Observance. If we can take as our exemplars such instances as Jacob Boehme and Saint-Martin, we know that they were neither of them ascetics in the ordinary sense of the word, and yet both were seers who made great advances in the higher knowledge of divine things and in complete dedication thereto. I do not mean that they were heralds of a new and milder dispensation, but they are notable instances of their time. I should like, if it were possible, to add that the existing interest in the higher aspects even of official religion, the progress made by many people now living in the world, above all, the desire after the Divine Union which is found occasionally in quarters antecedently unlikely, are all significant that man is coming closer to God; that the goal is nearer, the way simpler; and that we are passing, moreover, into the living recognition of the Divine Unity. But there is nothing so easy to misread as the hopeful signs of the times, and we must rather be content with appreciating at their proper value those traces of awakening and quickening which it is possible to descry around us. There is in any case no easy way to perfection, but there is one which can be cleared of unnecessary difficulties, to encourage which hope is not to countenance laxity, to make sin less impossible for the mystic, or to condone the life of luxury, even the life of ease. The perfect way must ever be a *Via Dolorosa* to the material part of our nature; but as the term is to be raised with Christ, any crucifixion by the way is transitory, and, in the last resource, it is perhaps of the sacramental kind rather than a literal passion.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE HIGHER MAGIA

TRUE mysticism can scarcely be said to possess a controversial side, as the great men of all ages on the things which are of all the greatest have borne the same witness, so that there is the least possible appeal from West to East, as from authority to counter authority. In speaking therefore throughout of Christian Mysticism, as distinguished from other mysteries of the inward life, it must be remembered that we are not proposing a diversity in the root-matter, because the root-matter is the same. This notwithstanding, since I am seeking to set forth some part of that mystery which is in Christ, I must not reduce my conviction by recourse to a spurious universalism and identify the great masters as if they were but one master, or the sanctuaries as if they were a single holy place. It is known that, in fine, they lead into one only place, yet seeing that the masters are many, it must be said that there are various and higher grades; and so also there is one paramount captain of our salvation, though the legions have other leaders.

It has been put forward during recent times, and under more than one form, that the keynote of Christian Mysticism, at least from the intellectual standpoint, is to be sought in the doctrine of interpretation. I refer to that faculty of insight which, on the one hand, claims to discern the secret law that underlies the mystery of being, and, on the other, the secret meaning which subtends the written word of sacred literature. Once—it is now long ago—an utterance of Matthew Arnold put the intellectual position of his period in a way which, at least then, had a wide appeal concerning Christianity in general. He said: 'At the present moment there are two things about the Christian Religion which must be obvious to every percipient person—one, that men cannot do without it; the other, that they cannot do with it as it is.' In so far as the position has changed, it has changed only by the application of another form of understanding, that is to say, the substitution of a mystic construction for that of liberal theology. The literal problems are the same and their difficulties are otherwise the same, under whatever reserves we speak of their proper and final value. We shall see shortly that Arnold's statement obtains not only in the original sphere of its application, namely, in connection with external Christianity, but in other fields, and a little thought must make evident that much of it would apply not only to doctrine as it is understood by the official churches, but also to views which find expression, almost on every side, in the more secret teaching of mystic literature, notwithstanding the change which I have mentioned.

To say this is to modify largely the application to that literature of the keynote characteristic which I have quoted regarding the science itself. I shall do well at this point to add that the ascription, though it is a great truth, has so far been advanced in considerable confusion of mind. If, this being so, we affirmed that the voice of mystic thought at this day, in so far as literature and written teaching are concerned, is a voice as of interpretation, it would seem to follow that, consciously or otherwise, we are setting aside by one rule not only the official churches but the masters of the inward life. To elucidate the position, let me say, firstly, that those who have recourse to the mystics for the hypermathematical formulæ of trinity in unity or the hyperphysics of virginal conception will not find what they want, as they are knocking at a gate behind which these difficulties have dissolved. Secondly, and from any other point of view, the records of the mystic schools call for interpretation quite as much as this is, by the hypothesis, required for our assistance in respect of the sacred scriptures. As I am concerned with important distinctions, it will be better to develop them as simply as possible; and I would say therefore, in fuller illustration of Matthew Arnold's dictum, that it is found difficult now, as in his day, to 'do with' the legend of the fall of man, or the history of the garden and the apple, as these things are inscribed upon the cortex of Genesis; it is similarly difficult to 'do with' the picture of the new Jerusalem, a ready-made city coming down four-square out of heaven, as it is understood literally in the last splendour of the Apocalyptic Vision. Between the covers of that great book of the mysteries which begins and ends thus, there is much more that man can scarcely 'do with,' as he is now posed for our consideration, though he has been taught it in its literal sense for nineteen centuries, the Church which is called of Christ having administered it bodily, as the angel administered the book to St. John the Evangelist, and though it may have been sweet in the mouth for the time, since there is a certain sweetness even in the husk of Christianity, yet in the belly of humanity it has been bitter, because the body of the Bible, like the body of Christ, does not, in the last resource, provide essential sustenance for our interior nature, since that is not of the flesh but the spirit. Now, the office of mystic interpretation should be, on its own hypothesis, to show that, beneath the surface, there is another and higher understanding of the annunciation of these mysteries, because it is impossible to advance that the external side of such doctrine does not require the light of a fuller understanding. The recognition of this necessity, if not so old as the written word itself, has been among us from time immemorial. So far as the Old Testament is concerned, it is at least as old in Israel as any date to which we may refer the Jewish literature of the exile, which literature, from the Zohar downwards, not to speak of the Talmud and the general storehouse of Midrashim, is concerned with nothing else. But the luminous body of Christian mystic literature enters into the same category as the sacred scriptures themselves. With that also in its external presentation man will do scarcely at this day. The student who determines to approach it for the first time is often apt to suppose that he will enter forthwith into some full light of the world within, but he is speedily dismayed and repelled by a still denser cloud on the sanctuary. I am not speaking at the moment of that which may be termed the particular sanctuary of occult science, or of the barbarous futilities which encircle it. In its doctrinal parts the surface difficulties of the mystic storehouse would seem to be no less serious than anything in authoritative Christian theology, possessing, in fact, every intellectual hindrance which attaches thereto, as well as some other barriers which may be held peculiar to itself. On any supposition that the Christian mystics were possessors of a deeper religious wisdom, one is met at the outset by the difficulty that the old masters seem to teach, in those of their books which have come down to us, the same fundamental dogmas for which many serious minds are urgently desiring interpretation. Dionysius the Areopagite teaches them, though there is something of gnostic involution in his estimate of the celestial hierarchies. They were taught by St. Thomas, though he has filled folios with avowed mystical theology. Every one cites Bonaventure and his *Itinerary of the Mind's Journey in God* as a notable manual of the life within, but he also teaches them. Eckart and Tauler and Molinos all taught them, and if in some things they have been charged with heresy, it is not because they disagreed with any central doctrine, and their heresies are not only unimportant in consequence but are largely matters of imputation. One would say that for them the Word of Life was held within the circle of the knowledge set forth by that school to which they personally belonged. They do not offer it with an additional subsurface sense; they do not in their accounts of spiritual progress give any indication of a period when the doctrines will be made void or substituted, or even subjected to a process of transmutation through the working of some canon of criticism outside the known limits of experience. If we turn from the mystics of the Latin Church to such an example of the independent schools as Jacob Boehme, there, in like manner, the same characteristics meet us, the same construction precisely of admitted doctrine, including things which it is now almost agreed to hold as intellectual scandals. Certain mystic views, for instance, in respect of everlasting punishment, will come through these channels with some additional force of repulsion because the student has expected another quality of light than that which is diffused from the gates of hell. It is not therefore to the literature itself that we must refer for any canons of interpretation, and this must be made quite plain, lest the postulants and neophytes should have recourse for the issues of interpretation to those who, at least on the surface, do not in their sense interpret at all. That which the mystics give us is the annals of the life of sanctity. It is the novices who require interpretation, not the enlightened men of old who had entered into direct knowledge, suffusing the old forms, and had, of all artists, the least reason to quarrel with their tools. As to these, they knew, and they were silent.

It seems necessary, at this point, to disclaim any express pretence of sympathy with current strictures on doctrine. The actuating spirit throughout is that which suffered the displeasure of St. Paul when he reproached those who did not discern the Body of the Lord. The process of selection in dogma is the very last which leads into truth. The real difficulties of doctrine are not the current difficulties; though as much, in the final resource, can perhaps be said of those who have mismanaged the symbolism as of those who think to improve it by reducing the numerical proportion. For the rest, I am noting a tendency as one speaking from without, and the cause at my own heart is sufficiently catholic to realise that when the Israel of this world loathes the manna in the wilderness, it may be politic to send it a certain flight of quails, that Israel may not go back to the fleshpots of Egypt. The literal aspects of all doctrine are not really less important than any mode of transliteral interpretation, but as it is the interpretation which people now need, or think at least that they need, there is nothing to hinder our providing it, so that any way we shall preserve the faith delivered to the saints. The imputed necessity is, however, too frequently a cry which concerns the common difficulties of doubt, the defects of untrained minds, and the stumblings of mere children. We have seen that the old mystics, who saw more deeply, were at need content with what they had; but the fact that they were does not cancel all forms of interpretation, because there are many awakenings, and the morning redness never looks precisely the same to different eyes. There were great saints to whom the unity of the Trinity constituted an intellectual difficulty which to us is now scarcely conceivable, and they had special lights vouchsafed them. Some part of the raw material of sanctity may at this day be not less genuinely hindered by the doctrine of a virginal conception.

The true way is neither to dissolve nor foreshorten, but, if it be possible, to increase experience and to ensure its direct ministry, which is the way of all the mystics. The mode of interpretation is not in any case to be regarded as a canon of criticism. It is, at its best in literature, an analogical manifestation of doctrine; and if it does not sustain and increase the light of the doctrine, it is thereby made void.

Perhaps it may otherwise be said that the things which are of all truth and high above all others are understood outside of doctrine, yet from doctrine they do not differ, at least in their right understanding. The first thing to recognise is that through many avenues God enters into the soul, though it is through those rarely which count for paths of progress before the face of the world. No statement ever went to the root of the matter as that utterance of Christ in the fourth Gospel—that the Prince of this World cometh and in Me he hath not anything—not even in natural goodness, not in commercial honour, not in any canon of integrity, not in qualified purity, not even in the promptings of love towards brethren. I do not mean that these things are under condemnation; they are under all blessings of which they can receive the ministry, but they have no part in Christ; they do not count in the numerical formulæ of eternal life, for there is one minus sign against all. They have their proper course and direction, but being in the world they are of it, and being of it they are without God in the world.

The official formulæ of religious doctrine and instruction have passed—and this almost, it may be, unavoidably—though not by the retrenchment of office or by inhibition in the channels of communication—under an analogous category of limitation. The spirit of the world has inducted itself into the stalls and thrones of the Holy Places. There has been no sale of the divine birthrights for the pottage which is offered in the markets of this visible kingdom; there has been neither election nor invitation; but an obscure process of inoculation has gone on secretly through the centuries, and the spirit of the world is there. It does not, in any sense, follow that the Shekinah has departed, and yet there is a cloud on the sanctuary, so that the light which should be indubitable before men is now seen only through glasses and darkly.

Perhaps for this reason, and perhaps always, the inward sense of the doctrines exceeds those offices of teaching which enter into the region of prescribed forms, having accredited schools for their mouthpiece, but, in any case, it comes to pass, as I have indicated, that these things also ultimately belong to the world. Moreover, the appeal to an inward sense, the search after some law of interpretation which shall read a deeper significance into the surface sense of the Word, are most truly the consciousness of a vitality which has been lost passing into formal expression. Perhaps, also, as much must be said of the secret schools as of the great churches which continue to administer the external forms of doctrine, though the life which inheres therein has been overlaid, and that which is within has therefore passed under still deeper veils. They have each of them their proper inheritance, and this is inalienable. The churches as depositaries of the doctrine and the secret schools as the custodians of the ancient terms of direct experience have not ceased to be desirable or essential within limits, though the master-secrets of interpretation and the true consciousness may have, in a measure, withdrawn from their precincts. Yet it is still only in virtue of great and rare gifts that the entrance into spiritual knowledge can take place independently of both.

It should be added, as a most important point of this brief thesis, that the two sources of illumination are not independent of each other, and do not work otherwise than in harmony together, though, on the external side, their wardens may proscribe and expel one another. The superincession of their higher ministry is made evident on all sides, being written at large, and this indeed plainly, on the literature which belongs to each. The great doctors of the Latin Church have at no time said anything in the great books which they have left as dowers to all the ages after them, which can be put forward by way of contrast to the higher understanding of what is taught in the chief schools of interpretation; but they are subject on both sides to reservations in respect of insufficiency which are made necessary by the hindrances of their exterior forms. The scholiasts on St. Thomas and the commentaries on hermetic writings transmitted from monks of old are in a similar position to all that has been bequeathed to us by the great schools of Kabalism, which offer instances of interpretation belonging to a signal degree, but overlaid by the special embarrassments that are particular to secret doctrines put forth, in this case, under exceedingly cumbersome veils. We, however, are the heirs of the ages in things mystic as in those of the outside world, and we, under proper guidance, can reach the true meaning which underlies these surfaces of things. That meaning will not tell us, like the solar mythologists, that Christ was only crucified in the starry heavens, but it will show us after what manner the secret of the Word of God is contained within the soul of man and how its proper understanding is to be sought there, seeing that it is part of the soul's experience. The invitation of the mystic life is to come and see; the promise of the mystic life is that we shall attain to see. We shall find possibly, if we follow on this call, that some things which appeared to us and have been held as essential, and even central, look differently in the broader light; but at no stage shall we find that grace has made void either her sacraments or symbols. As it is not by the challenging of doctrine that we shall get to the truth which is of God, so it is not by the substitution of Z for X, more especially if Z, in the last resource, remains, like X, an unknown quantity. Interpretations of this order are not less unprofitable to the soul than the enlightenments of the higher criticism—which are understood to have failed. Very likely the lower criticism—if that means ordinary church teaching—has failed after its own manner; but there are greater issues outside these alternatives. The study of the stellar universe is not without its difficulties, but the broad universal laws under the aspect of which it manifests are not less in the possession of man as the reward for his ages of toil; and any one who, because of those difficulties, should attempt to make a fresh start, ignoring all precedents of knowledge, would have a vain labour for his only reward. The study of the spiritual life has, in like manner, proceeded for ages and ages; it has taken us a certain distance, amidst many troubles and imperfections; it will profit nothing to repudiate it and attempt to begin again. But we may gain something by the caution which mistakes have taught us; and as it is necessary that here and now we should live in the world, yet desirable that we should not be of it, so also our proper place is in those churches and institutions wherein Providence has installed us, though it is above all things desirable that, being in them, we should be of them in respect more especially of that which is the highest within them, and should in our individual persons so sustain the light of spiritual life that it shall shine not only before men incorporated in the sodality of the natural world, but shall glorify the great confraternities which glorify the Father of Lights, looking for that time when the Orient from on high shall once again revisit us.

We need, in conclusion, that light which shall enable us to discern the Body of the Lord, and we shall not be assisted towards such discernment if we begin by denying the body. It is the fuller light of the wider life which brings the gifts of interpretation—that light which comes into the heart as the result of real life—that gift by which we see under the Divine guidance, according to the measure of our reception, the spirit and the truth which are behind the symbolism of doctrine. It is this which I have chosen to term the Higher Magia, understanding those words in the sense of wisdom. It is the inspiration and the leading which took the Kings of the East, who were called Magi, from their unknown land into that place of sacrament and mystery where the Kingdom of Heaven was manifested within space and time.

PART II

VESTIGES OF THE OUTER WAYS

LESSER MYSTERIES OF THE LIFE OF LIFE

It is possible to quote many names which belong to the literature of mysticism within the folds of the Christian Churches, and a few at least from which appeal would perhaps seem perilous. But we can almost calculate in legions the names of those who, in virtue of some limitation, either through stricture in their surroundings or deficiency of faculty and grace, appear rather as dwellers on the borders of that which for every mystic is the life of life. They have left their memorials behind them, and these indicate that the threshold on which they remained had open doors through which they could and did behold not only the sacred rites celebrated in long cloisters, but something of the grand mysteries which are particular to the sanctuary itself. One of their characteristics is therefore an experience which, of its kind, is obtained at first hand, and this has always its grade of value; while, seeing that so many of us, for whom the greater experience of the mystic has become the one thing desirable, are, by our callings and their environments, precluded from nearly everything that is outside the simple intellectual realisation, it often happens that such memorials can offer us aids to reflection in ways that are comparatively easy, sometimes almost elementary. In this manner the 'second best,' though it enters into no comparison with the great good, brings to us precious gifts, as the Kings of the East brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh—gifts which signify all that is beyond themselves and the givers. I propose some brief excursion into these paths, now almost untrodden, taking as exemplars certain writings and their authors wherein I have personally found suggestions, and believe that they may prove of service to others.

One of these books has been known for many years past to a few collectors of the minor curiosities of the soul, which no less lean towards greatness, under the title of *Le Mystère de la Croix, affligeante et consolante, de Jésus Christ et de ses Membres, écrit au milieu de la Croix au dedans et au dehors.* It has suffered from the neglect of centuries, and perhaps it has also suffered from the zeal of its rare admirers.

The Mystery of the Cross has a literary story which is at once unusual and not a little suggestive. It was finished, according to the original title-page, on August 12, 1732, and it was published in the course of the same year without apparently attracting any marked attention. This notwithstanding, it appeared in a German translation at Leipsic in 1782, and it has been stated that in this form it was long read and highly prized by theosophical circles of the period. It was also re-issued at Lausanne in 1786, or 1791, under the attributed editorship of Philippe du Toit de Mambrini, who, adopting a certain guise of Protestantism and an assumed name, published a number of volumes which are adaptations of Christian mysticism conceived in an errantry of the spirit that is not less than bizarre. The first French issue had become very scarce in his day, and there is ground to think that it was misconceived by the alleged editor, who refers to it in his own works; but I have no record of its destiny under his fantastic hands. Probably it perished, almost without a sign, and was unheard of until it attracted attention from the anonymous author of a book called *A Suggestive Enquiry into the Hermetic Mystery*, of which a few copies were circulated prior to its destruction in the year 1850. Ten years later the French work was reprinted in London, under the auspices of Williams and Norgate as publishers, by an English editor, also anonymous, who neglected the obvious precaution of translating it, so that it is still under its first seals. A rendering in manuscript does, however, exist, though I am unable to speak of its claims. The author termed himself simply 'A Disciple of the Cross of Jesus,' and till 1877 it was known only in Germany that this pseudonym covered, or is said to have covered, the identity of a Mystic called Douze-

Tems, described as a countryman and spiritual kinsman of Madame Guyon. Dr. Otto Zoeckler, who furnishes this information, does not appear to speak with any first-hand knowledge; it seems probable from its form that the book was, as its writer hints, the work of a man experimenting in a language not wholly familiar to himself, and it is possible at least that he was a German of French descent. Dr. Zoeckler's work unfortunately errs in several ways on the side of imprudence, as its English translation in 1877 veers perilously towards the illiterate. There is no reason, in any case, to suppose that a name like Douze-Tems is itself anything better than a pseudonym. On the whole, we must rest content with the scanty particulars which have been transmitted, chiefly by report, concerning the writer, as follows:—

1. That his ancestors were French Protestants of the Desert.

2. That he sought an asylum from persecution in the dominions of the Elector of Saxony.

3. Finally, that for some unknown reason he was imprisoned at Sonnenstein on the Elbe.

The last statement rests on the authority of the book, and is the only certainty concerning the author, though, in spite of one whimsical remark, somewhat after the manner of Leibnitz, it is difficult to suppose that he was wholly unconnected with so much of the Rosicrucian movement as may have remained in secret at his period. The connection is to be assumed, at least tentatively, from a number of his allusions and generally from his affiliations in mysticism. On this subject it is scarcely possible, or indeed necessary, to enlarge in the present place, nor does it signify much what was the author's private history or what his real patronymic. Perhaps, in the last resource, it would also not signify seriously to the mystic if the Fraternity mentioned had been itself, as Douze-Tems suggests, only a beautiful invention, though projected in good faith. It is possible, however, that the remark may call for a certain interpretation, and is an instance of that precaution concerning which the author has warned the correspondent whom he addresses, and readers generally through him, namely, that several matters have not been fully treated, and that about others his prudence has counselled him to maintain a certain reserve. The various chapters are indeed sown with maxims extracted literally from published Rose-Cross documents, and it is difficult to account for such uniform fidelity in citation if Douze-Tems did not possess affiliations which he informally disavows. However this may be, he has signal connections in literature which are of the esoteric order outside anything that he may have derived from sources ascribed to the Fraternity. He recalls continually the later Kabalists, for one example, and he must have celebrated many unusual marriages in books before he wrote his own treatise. I mention these points because they will interest people who are concerned rather with historical issues, and on this account they are not less than important.

I must perhaps confess to some personal predilection derived from strange ways of reading, if I express the opinion that it is probably from the later Kabalists that Douze-Tems drew part at least of the intellectual generosity which is one of his most attractive characteristics. There is nothing to show that he knew them at first hand, but there were many treasures of learning then available in Latin Books which presented Jewish theosophy as an eirenicon between the Law of Moses and the Law of Christ, and which sought at once to lay the foundation of lasting peace in Israel and to heal the many dissensions of the several sects in Christendom. From sectarian bitterness Douze-Tems was wholly free, and, though certainly not a Catholic, he speaks invariably with an enlightened indulgence towards the Latin Church and its mystery which, at his period, was exceedingly rare in those who did not belong to it. As the work is so little known and in no sense readily accessible, I must not permit it to be inferred that its Rosicrucian and Kabalistic connections make *The Mystery of the Cross* beyond measure obscure and difficult. On the contrary, it is a manageable treatise which, supposing discrimination in the student, is full of wise guidance and ministries at the initial stages of the life within. It has, in an unusual degree, that seal of conviction which I have already mentioned; in spite of certain limitations, that are sufficiently obvious, it is the work of a man who has been in those high places of which he discourses, and there will be the less disposition to challenge his claim to the use of one daring statement which appears in his first lines: *Absque nube pro nobis.* What was that mystery which for him had ceased to be clouded and of which he claims to have written both 'within and without'—that is to say, with a plain external sense and yet with an inward meaning? Who was this pilgrim through eternity who could cite one other maxim: *Dulcia non meruit qui non gustavit amara*—which bitterness is actually the experience of that cross the mystery of which he records? He says further, with the Rosicrucian Masters who went before him:

> '*In cruce sub sphæra*
> *Venit sapientia vera.*'

Here there is no opportunity to discuss questions of symbolism, but the simple planetary figure of the star Venus represents, for those who used it after this concealed fashion, the crucifixion of love issuing in that wisdom which is not of this world. Those who are acquainted with symbolism may be disposed to regard the apparently obscure allusion as one of the keys which open the closed entrance to the particular palace of Douze-Tems; for, in its final understanding, the work of the mystic can only present itself to the mind as a part of the work of that love which produced the whole universe in consequence of an infinite clemency. In this case, the bitterness which is inseparable from the Cross of advancement is the essential acerbity of election, whereby that which is gross is transmuted, and this realised, the darkness of all the Carmels is indeed no longer clouded.

The book is divided into fifteen tabulated considerations—on the origin of the Cross; its outward and inward providences; its use and misuse; its perpetuation after death; the supernatural experiences which it comprises, and in particular its lessons of humiliation and of victory in the passion and death of Christ. It is not a work which lends itself readily to quotation, or to any process of summarising which will carry much light with it. A synopsis of its chapters would also suggest little, apart from the knowledge of its pages. To put the matter briefly, it is a story of the experience of a soul to which utter resignation has brought peace and knowledge by some first-hand contact with hidden truth.

If the afflictions and advancements of the Cross were those simply which are less or more with us along all our daily roads, if they were entirely identical with our common trials and were the common recompense of our resignations, there would be little probably between the leaves of this book which would make its notice seem necessary, for the literature of the lighter mysticism is almost as the sands of the sea; it provides the first spelling-books and readers of the spiritual life in all the churches and sects; and it is characterised by every convention and every form of insufficiency. On the surface, nevertheless, or at least for many people, this may well seem to be the simple limits of the message found in *The Mystery of the Cross.* It is certainly the rigid term for those unversed in the separation of the inward from the outward sense—for those to whom the spiritual expression *intus et foris scriptus* connotes something that is past finding out. But there are others who will understand readily enough, under what guise soever, that the Cross about which there is a mystery is no economy of catholic salvation, as it is no mere application of morality, and it is to these that the obscure mystic will come with another meaning in his message than that of light trials in life and the way to bear them. He will say that the knowledge of God is only to be obtained at the centre, while this centre must be sought, which is not by any means impossible in the present life, though no teacher can affirm that the path is easy. There can also be no question that it carries the seeker far away from those putative particular centres which are recognised and count for anything in the material world. It is often claimed that a certain knowledge of the Divine, as at great distances and I know not under what veils, is obtainable by the testimony of things which are without; and it is indeed to furnish these evidences that is the chief purpose of the multiplicity which exists in Nature. *The Mystery of the Cross* has some of the sacramental kinships which come from the touch of Nature, but it makes wholly for that final end, of which its author truly says that there is none other conceivable as a term of the soul. It is married, as will be expected, to a doctrinal system which, within limits, is characteristic of the period, though for that period it is also liberal, in the laudable sense of the word; it is liberal, for example, in eschatology, not in the sentimental sense which sometimes draws a broad mark of cancellation over great principles of equity, but with a simplicity which is chaste, severe, and conscious of the counter-claim, yet ends as reasonable eschatology can alone end, namely, with God as all in all for all that lives and has its being in Him.

We are not so intellectually certain at the present day that the old divines and single-hearted seers of the past, clearly as they did discern and steadfastly as they were accustomed to look, are entirely indisputable guides upon specific doctrinal points. We may not be prepared to accept literally the particular interpretation offered by *The Mystery of the Cross* concerning, let us say, the descent of Christ into Hades; certain issues have entered into the mystic consciousness which had scarcely been raised in the days of the earlier leaders; and this is why I have referred to a saving gift of discernment as desirable in the modern student. All this notwithstanding, the book remains, when it is taken in the larger sense, as one which will be helpful in the initial stages because it makes for that kind of righteousness which must be the first possession of the mystic, namely, the unswerving devotion to something which has to be done with our might, constituting the origin of that general and catholic cross which has to be borne in the flesh—which is indeed the common burden, as it is also the common support, of those who have resolved steadfastly to enter the true path. That, outside all ethical questions, such righteousness has its advantages, is known early, as it is assuredly known fully. That for the world it must be always folly, because the world can judge only after discrimination of its own kind; and that it is at the same time the first step in wisdom; these things will be also known, and they are indeed assumed beforehand. That it is a cross within as well as a cross without he has to realise profoundly; and seeing that all mystics are acquainted with seasons of inhibition, he will in due course experience what our author terms 'the use and abuse of the Cross.' But when he has overcome in this struggle, he will have entered already into a moderate familiarity with the designs of God in the Cross, and will be prepared to realise that, in so far as he falls short of his term, this Cross will follow him to the end of his days, even after death, at once his humiliation and his triumph.

I have perhaps intentionally presented what might be termed the metaphysical process of *The Mystery of the Cross* without guise or decoration. It proceeds entirely from the principle that it is impossible for God to do otherwise than love His children, however far they pass under the law of rebellion, and, so far as I am aware, it is to this extent the first professedly mystic thesis, since the days of Origen, concerning that reintegration of man in God which became afterwards so famous in the school of Martines de Pasqually and his successors. The punishments of the Cross after death are therefore the free workings of the scheme of redemption, and humanity ends where it also began, in the Divinity which is its home. Some ways are short and keen and splendid; some are long and obscure, with the darkness of all suspension and desolation; but the term is still the same: and sweetened by patience and clemency the mystic who has sounded the depths, but at the same time can give us a scale-plan professionally tabulated of many exalted altitudes, has come forth from the experience consoled, saying with a later adept, 'that God, who alone is real and alone present everywhere, fills the limitless immensity with the splendours and eternal consolations of the sovereign reason.'

The lessons of the recluse of Sonnenstein, though delivered with an accent which is individual and set apart almost wholly from the conventions and commonplaces of the purely devotional treatise, have their affiliations in mystic literature which not only deserve remark but have actually an aspect of importance, because they interlink men whose writings and lives were at the same time widely different. To simplify this point, I will mention six dates which represent the publication of as many books, the first of which is *The Mystery of the Cross*, in 1732. The second date is 1615, just prior to the Rosicrucian fervours, when the great name of Cardinal Bellarmine was attached to the title of a tract concerning 'The Ascent of the Mind in God by the Grade of Natural Things.' The third is 1677, when the works of a lesser but still illustrious prince of the Church, Cardinal John Bona, were collected at Antwerp, including his *Manuductio ad Cœlum* and *Via Compendii ad Deum.* The fourth is the year 1738, which saw the appearance of the first volume of *The Testimony of a Child of the Resurrection concerning several matters of the Interior Life*, extending in all to nine volumes, which were the work of an unknown author, assisted by an anonymous editor, and were in their way a treasury of singular discourses. The fifth is 1784, when Louis Claude de Saint-Martin issued his *Ecce Homo.* The sixth and last book appeared in 1801 at Paris, as a translation from the Russian, under the title of *Quelques traits de l'Église Intérieure.* It connects, quite undesignedly, with *The Cloud upon the Sanctuary*, though it does not possess its authority, or indeed its convincing accent. I am unable to give any information concerning the ostensible author, the Chevalier Loupoukine, and I must dissuade my readers from supposing that I am simply making a short bibliographical list. The dates, if not exactly nothing, are of slender importance, and the only consanguinity between the persons is that of the spiritual order, on the principle, recognised by Saint-Martin, that all who have truly attained their spiritual majority use the same language since they come from the same country. Speaking generally, they owed nothing to one another, though the two Cardinals may have made acquaintance in the letter, even as they were united in the experience. Further, it may be true, as suggested by Mambrini, that Saint-Martin had once at least met with *The Mystery of the Cross*, but there is nothing to justify our expression of a bare possibility, from which very little would have followed, in the language of even tolerable certainty. I should say that the Chevalier Loupoukine had never heard of Eckartshausen, and it signifies less than little for the range of the documents that the unknown *Child of the Resurrection*, as well as his editor, had read quite widely the current French literature of mysticism. At the same time, as I have intimated, they are all kindred in the spirit, and the order in which I have cited them, though it violates chronology, is one which should serve to simplify the successive tabulation of their points of correspondence and divergence, as also after what manner one accounts for another, while he also extends another, each testifying signally to each, almost supposing each, after the tacit manner. The truth is that such books, as also already indicated, are like doors which open successively, distance beyond distance, into certain great chambers of the soul. Their analogy is hereof, and hereof is also their importance. The works of Cardinal Bellarmine and Cardinal Bona, fully differentiated as they are between themselves, constitute an introduction to a spiritual life of the active and practical kind, while fully enforcing the true end of that life and the particular mastery of its experience. They have naturally many elements that have passed out of the region of necessity, and they are more valuable as intimations than as precise handbooks. Shall I say that they occupy, relatively speaking, much the same position as a Layman's Mass-book, reproduced from a rare manuscript by the Early English Text Society, when compared with a literal Missal containing all the local variations, all the propers of the saints, and all the rubrics? I am speaking, of course, suggestively, not instituting a parallel. They contain what devotional treasuries term the Key of Heaven, but they do not always open exactly the kind of doors by which we, in these days, can most directly gain entrance into the House of the Father. On the other hand, the *Ecce Homo*, though it is much more profound, much more advanced, as one would say, calls for restatement and, as it stands, for some enlightened reserve, while *The Mystery of the Cross* is not without a certain fantastic spirit, and the *Testimony of a Child* is a little hindered by its diffusive sentiment. Of *The Characteristics of the Interior Church* it is more difficult to speak; it is at once so much and so little—so much in its unconscious analogies with the far more important work of Eckartshausen and so little, since, from one point of view, it is purely a devotional treatise, one among many thousands, and not especially distinctive.

It is impossible within ordinary limits to make an express summary of points of correspondence, and the bare affirmation must suffice, at least for the moment. To myself it comes with a certain quality of illumination. The different actuating influences, modes of thought, and even of point of view on the part of mystics who were at heart really one and tended to the same term are assuredly of considerable importance; those of whom we are speaking were all after their manner remarkable; they also lie beyond the habitual course of knowledge for those who are themselves professed mystics at the present day and are exploring one or other of the same paths, unconscious, perhaps, in some cases how far they have been preceded. The analogies, which are much more intimate and naturally much more easy to recognise, have one advantage which makes for simplicity of treatment; on the one hand, we are dealing with men who had attained their convictions by means of first-hand experience; but, on the other, they had not passed into those heights of the spiritual life which spell extreme difficulty for the aspirant who is seeking to follow them. The evidences of such attainment do not at least appear in the books, which are therefore serviceable manuals, well adapted for the school of the novices. The indoctrination differs, in other words, from that of St. John of the Cross, Ruysbroeck, and Jacob Boehme, who are rather for adepts than for neophytes. Let me say, in conclusion, that it is better, in one sense at least, to read books that are imperfect, so only that the aim which they propose is the one undeniable and true end of all things, than the reputed masterpieces which do not make for eternity; and, this being granted, it is not only desirable but necessary that we should be proficient in the nature of their imperfections. This is why theses like *The Mystery of the Cross* are so much more valuable than any technical criticism can realise, because they teach as much in their deficiencies as they teach in their fulness, though it is true that this quality of their ministration is more strictly for the doctors than the scholars. I do not mean that *The Mystery of the Cross* would tempt even a tyro to become a protestant of the desert, if such a vocation were possible in these days; but, its inward message notwithstanding, it might dispose him to believe that some of the great things are outside rather than within him, and that the indefectible gospel has been written elsewhere than in the soul. I would therefore counsel the few persons who may fall across a work which the inscrutable star-workings have contrived again to make rare, that they should avoid above all being scandalised at its occasional touch of the grotesque and its leaning towards a few issues which deflect from the path of the wise. On these accounts it is the more rather than the less of importance; most of the great books of the soul call for rewriting, and one might have some ground to feel doubtful of any which offered no weak point to the strictures of their brethren. There are amazing fatuities in Ruysbroeck, though he had sailed over trackless seas, and St. John of the Cross on Carmel seems occasionally like the ingenious gentleman of La Mancha rather than Galahad at the Graal Castle; but it is chiefly for this reason that, being that which they were, they can yet extend helping hands.

BY-WAYS OF HALF A CENTURY

THE unfrequented paths of intellectual activity are as rich in curiosities as are its highways in great landmarks; but few have time to follow them. Few only can turn aside from the lessons of the direct road for the suggestions of indirection which are met with far from the beaten track. Outside the common ground of history and philosophy there are still many paths of fantasy in thought and action which are worth hearing of, even by those who have neither opportunity nor inclination to pursue them on their own account. And of such by-ways none are more curious, none certainly more fantastic, than those which belong to the first half of that nineteenth century out of which we can scarcely be said to have emerged, except in the matter of date, so strong has been the spell thereof, and so far-reaching is its atmosphere. The quickening and fermenting which, all over Europe, led up to the supreme event of the French Revolution, produced, among other phenomena, many curious awakenings of mental activity. There were seers and prophets everywhere; men claiming strange powers and men possessing strange missions rose up on every side; in feeling and in perception, as in thought, the world was at fever-heat. Even the impostors were splendid, and so fervid was every heart that many of these were at least partially sincere, however flagrant their deceptions. Before Cagliostro, Althotas, his mysterious instructor, as it is said; before Althotas, Saint-Germain; before Saint-Germain, Lascaris, the alchemist of Mitylene, with a score of others; a long line of wonderful pretenders, so extensively believed in for their season that in a certain sense they may have come to believe in themselves. As the public warrant of their assumptions, there was the standing marvel of the mysterious batôn of Mesmer; there was the persuasive personality of Emanuel Swedenborg; there were the oracular utterances of the illuminated man about town, Saint-Martin, the so-called 'Unknown Philosopher,' in the highest circles of the world and yet not of it; there were the enigmatic romances of Cazotte; while overshadowing and including all these were the great unsearchable claims of continental Freemasonry. Never did astrologers and makers of almanacs read such presages in the starry heavens; never was the alchemist so near witnessing the precipitation of the gold in his crucible; never did strange and almost nameless rites of magic and of necromancy so closely approach in their results the similitude of a pathological fact; never did the saintly visionaries so nearly attain in their contemplation the knowledge of things everywhere regarded as inscrutable. Unknown secret associations, practising these and other mysteries, seemed to be generated spontaneously; no one had heard of them previously; no one could guess their origin; yet expectant hearts palpitated, because all felt that they were on the threshold of some great mystery. At Paris, at Lyons, at Bordeaux—for France at least—it might already have assumed a shape. But the fever reached the paroxysm of its crisis, and then the stars had no longer a voice; all the visions were stultified and ceased; Cagliostro was in the hands of that unanswerable Inquisition which never gave up its dead, and but seldom its living; the divine messenger from Sweden had less secretly passed away. Presently the overwhelming fact of the great dictator shadowed all others, and on every side the nations seemed preparing for the coming Armageddon. No one thought of secret orders or personal inspirations when Napoleon assumed to himself the crown of empire, and cast down his gauntlet as a challenge to the civilised world. It was the day of the Grand Army.

In the year 1801, this subsidence of activity in the by-ways with which we are concerned found certain personalities remaining over from the previous century, portents which the flight of time was gradually drawing down into the past. Among them, at once pathetic and fascinating, was Louis Claude de Saint-Martin. Belonging to the privileged and therefore proscribed classes, he had lost all, or nearly all, of which the general upheaval could deprive him—dear friends, the competence which was his birthright, and, worse than these, the possibility of a tolerant audience. At the threshold of the nineteenth century we observe him, notwithstanding, still hopeful, still pursuing the career of the enlightened philosophical enthusiast, and still the most public-spirited of his intellectual fraternity, discussing now the way to the blessed life, because he was a mystic in his enthusiasm; now the lessons of the Revolution; and yet again the mission of Consul Bonaparte; all with a correspondent in Switzerland whom he had never met. Sixty years and more were destined to elapse before his letters—one of the most remarkable memorials of that perturbed period—were to see the light, and they are now to be accounted among its landmarks. There were books, however, of Saint-Martin, which, in spite of the apathy of the time, continued to make their way unobtrusively and almost negatively. On the threshold of the new age he dared to tell his countrymen of regenerated man and his nature; of the ministry of that real humanity which underlies our external being; and more persistently still, of the depths and heights which, some two centuries earlier, had been scaled and sounded by a poor German shoemaker, named Jacob Boehme. There is no need to state that at the present day these books are generally unread, or they would have no title to be included among the obscure ways of thought belonging to the first half of the nineteenth century. But they remain with all the strangeness of their accent, which must have sounded stranger still at their period, seeing that amidst the clamours of crashing kingdoms they told the inner secrets of the Christian religion as deeply, as earnestly, though in all things else unlike, as any of the saintly voices heard century after century from the antique sanctuaries of the Latin Church.

With Saint-Martin there was associated—though it is only within recent years that the fact has transpired—one wholly unknown to fame, and his antithesis by vocation, that is, J. B. Willermoz, a merchant of Lyons, who in the midst of his business preoccupations found time to interest himself in the strange schemes of Masonic initiation propagated by a mysterious Spaniard, called Martines de Pasqually. About this individual we now know more than was known when the first biographers of Saint-Martin speculated, wondered, or propagated misconceptions concerning him. He is said to have been one of the last disciples of Emanuel Swedenborg, but he does not seem to have followed the system of his master, and when he produced his variation of Masonry it was not the so-called Swedenborgian Rite which once found followers in France, and may still be heard of to-day, but one possibly of his own devising, for which he claimed not only that it was the sole genuine Masonry, but that it had been received, if not bodily, at least as regards its inspiration, from the old brotherhood of the Rosy Cross. Two things stand out clearly in the life of Pasqually as we know it—his sincerity and his fervid religious devotion. As to these we possess witnesses between whom there is no trace of concerted action. For the rest, it must be said frankly that his Masonic rite does not seem to have possessed any merit by which it deserves to be distinguished from similar inventions of that fantastic period, arrogating to themselves the exclusive title of primeval Masonry; while the one treatise that he is known to have written, though it exhibits some slender connections with philosophical systems of the past, is in reality so confused as to be very nearly unintelligible. Swedenborgian or Rosicrucian, true Illuminé or enthusiast, whichever he may have been, or all in turn, Pasqually appeals to us more especially as an adept in those theurgic or magical practices which at the time found votaries both in France and Germany. That is to say, he had recourse to formulæ of evocation, with which he and those about him contrived either to produce something or to sustain themselves with the idea that they did. And this brings us back to Willermoz, who, while Saint-Martin was writing great books intended to demonstrate that all external ways and all search after wonderful phenomena were full of delusion, and did not advance the soul, was sedulously occupied, and, as it is thought also, successfully, in those very pursuits, and in preserving from utter destruction the remnant of the secret Masonry which, now under the auspices of Pasqually, and again under those of Saint-Martin in his earlier days, once flourished at Lyons. Between the epoch of the French Revolution and that of Éliphas Lévi, who died in 1875, and has been termed the modern magician by those who regard him seriously, the name of Jean Baptiste Willermoz is alone connected with magical operations in France, so far as history is concerned. They have, however, to be distinguished in his case, as in that of Pasqually, from the ordinary ends and intentions of that questionable art. The Masonic Rite of Pasqually and of his pupils did not seek to communicate with departed spirits, like modern mediums, for that which was supposed to be obtained as a result of its procedure was the physical appearance of a being termed the Repairer, by whom, from the evidence that is available, there can be no doubt that Christ was understood. The difference may be well enough an indication only of more profound delusion, but it serves to set apart this school of Christian wonder-working from all others of its kind, even if their rite itself offers little to distinguish it from the grimoires, the so-called keys of Solomon, and other depraved medleys of Jewish Kabalism which formed part of the chapbooks and literature of colportage in French country-places at the period. The fact is additionally interesting because, so far as we can discern, the doctrinal substratum of Pasqually seems to have been drawn indirectly from the German Kabalism which flourished in the days of Rosenroth, and was designed for the conversion of all Jewry to Christianity. It had been subjected, however, to so much alteration, that it is difficult to speak precisely, or even to exclude as an alternative the Swedenborgian origin which has been maintained by later French critics.

In 1805 Saint-Martin transferred by death the process of his return to that unity which he had so long desired, and he was survived by Willermoz for something like ten years, or more than twice the time that he had been preceded by the Comte de Saint-Germain, the sole personage of a period prolific in adepts to whom there is some authority for ascribing a higher initiation than could have been dispensed by those from whom Saint-Martin drew his early teaching. Madame de Staël represents Saint-Germain as a remarkable figure in Court circles prior to the Revolution, and as dying in obscurity and poverty overwhelmed by the terrors of a future life. We are now in possession of evidence which gives us a more correct picture, and by which also we can disassociate him from

Cagliostro, for whose connections with older secret societies, in spite of many statements to the contrary, there is no evidence worthy of the name. We can at least say that Saint-Germain was not an adventurer in the invidious sense of the term, and we meet him under circumstances which make his connection with old fraternities of the past at least tolerable as an inference. That is to say, assuming the existence of such fraternities at the end of the eighteenth century, there is tolerable reason to suppose that he was one of their representatives, more especially in the case of the mysterious Knights of Light. At the same time, he has left nothing behind him by which we can judge him at first hand, and he produced, so far as can be seen, no great or lasting influence.

Willermoz died in or about the year 1815, almost coincidently with Mesmer, and this brings us to Anton Mesmer, who, from obscure hints in old books and other seeming accidents, is thought to have stumbled on one of the secrets of the old initiating brotherhoods, and he most assuredly gave forth an important pathological fact to the modern world, however much he may have misinterpreted it. His great secret was a part of the greater mystery of the will, the secret of intentness. Royal Commissions and Royal Academies went to work collecting and sifting evidence to prove or disprove the existence of a vital fluid transmitted in mesmerism from operator to subject. They found, as might be expected, that there was no fluid, and the action of mind upon mind did not apparently concern them. The brilliant empiric who owed nothing to knowledge or initiation, unless Kenneth Mackenzie is correct, which is doubtful, in saying that he belonged to the Knights of Light, retired with broken prospects. We find him at the close of his life in a little German village, practising his cures modestly, without emolument, and dying so unknown that his grave was discovered, so to speak, some fifty years later by an English tourist, the Rev. C. Kegan Paul, who may well have forgotten before he himself died that he it was who alone wrote verses to the memory of the discoverer of animal magnetism.

There is one other name in connection with France at this period which must engage our attention for a moment. It is that of the Chevalier du Toit de Mambrini, occasionally but erroneously identified by some biographers with the Comte de Divonne, who was the friend of Saint-Martin and on whom Saint-Martin exercised for a time a great influence, gratefully acknowledged. We have only meagre information concerning Mambrini, and Saint-Martin, who, despite the fact that he termed himself the Unknown Philosopher, knew nearly every one, and was well known by all, seems to have been unfamiliar with his personality. He is mentioned twice only in the course of Saint-Martin's correspondence with the Baron de Liebistorf, and it must be said regretfully that it is rather a hostile reference. Mambrini was a Christian Mystic so much after the manner of Saint-Martin, that he has been almost universally regarded as one of his disciples, which is not true either personally or philosophically, nor does he appear to have belonged to the sect of Pasqually or to any of the Masonic fraternities. All that we know of him is, that about the time when Saint-Martin was himself issuing his most important and mature works, there appeared, sometimes on a much more elaborate scale, these rival handbooks of a kindred philosophic Christianity. They have their merits, and perhaps at the present day, or here, at least, in England, they are not much more unknown than the works of the Unknown Philosopher. They have none of the genius of Saint-Martin, and they abound in crudities which are very similar to his own. The reference in the letters of Saint-Martin was occasioned by a remark of Baron de Liebistorf, who might, however, have been prepared to admire Mambrini, had he received the cue from his correspondent. But he did not receive it, for the riper thinker had read Mambrini without conviction, though he confessed himself somewhat startled. It was not altogether gracious, but we may be sure that it was not ill intended, and above all not suggested by any spirit of rivalry. Saint-Martin was fastidious in his philosophy, and in his later life it is said that he took none but Boehme into his heart of hearts.

With Saint-Martin, Willermoz, and Mambrini we have exhausted this school of French thought at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and when these had departed at their several seasons, the animal magnetists alone remained.

Germany did not share to any marked extent in the particular enthusiasms of her neighbour on the eve of the Revolution. She had passed through two earlier awakenings, firstly, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, when the report of the Rosicrucian fraternity was noised abroad in the world, and, secondly, when the Baron Knorr von Rosenroth published his great work on Kabalism, placing the claim of this Jewish theosophy within the reach of his countrymen and all Latin-reading Europe. From that period Germany had never wanted adepts of the secret sciences, but at the time of the French Revolution the country in question, more even than France, was under the propaganda of an advanced sceptical philosophy with a defined centre of diffusion, at the head of which was the bookseller Nicolai. Its most important consequence, so far as our subject is concerned, was the foundation of the political order known as the Illuminati, at the head of which was Weishaupt; but it is only important because ignorance still ascribes to the mystery of this political scheme the complexion of a transcendental mystery; and because, when the organisation was broken up forcibly in Germany, the adepts of the infidel and revolutionary fraternity took refuge in France and merged themselves in the political and secret doings of that country. Germany, nevertheless, as already indicated, possessed traces of Illuminati of another order, and among these also its impostors. The adventurer Schroepfer filled Leipsic with evocations, and the rumour of evocations, and was driven to suicide in order to avoid being unmasked. He has found his apologists, however, at a later day, but the imposture is nearly indubitable.

The learned and saintly Lavater is a figure of an altogether different aspect, and his group is one of the most interesting to the student at his period in Germany. All its names belong to those side-issues with which we are concerned here, down even to Heinrich Jung Stilling, with his suggestions of missionary enthusiasm, and of a Lutheran theology illuminated by a beautiful life. But that Lavater, in spite of all this, was not specially recommended to the inward-seeking mind of Saint-Martin is not perhaps surprising. The discoverer of physiognomy, as appears by his *Secret Journal*, had only one thing besides the devotional spirit in common with the author of the *New Man*, and that was an experience in those physical manifestations to which reference has already been made. Where Lavater failed in perfection from the standpoint of the Frenchman, was that he had not explicitly passed out of this elementary stage and its delusions; and there is a note of jubilation in the correspondence which has been cited so frequently when it went abroad that the daughter of Lavater had resolved on the spiritual life. What followed from this determination is not known to history, and the group which surrounded the physiognomist belongs really to the eighteenth century, for in so far as it passed that period it passed also its importance.

But this brief reference will serve to introduce another and more important personage, who, like Lavater, figures in the correspondence of Saint-Martin, and, unlike either the German physiognomist or the French theosopher, is not the subject merely of passing mention or of frigid criticism, but of respectful reference and frequent eulogy. The Baron, who waited mostly on the superior opinion of his correspondent, introduced the Councillor von Eckartshausen with a tentative panegyric, which seemed to invite a favourable reception for one who had impressed him almost as much as the French philosopher, and with whom he also corresponded, no doubt after the same manner. Whether in this case the communications have been preserved we do not actually know, but it is more than doubtful. Outside the pages of his letters there is nothing to show that Saint-Martin took any pains to understand his German brother, even when he wrote on a subject so dear to his own heart as the mysterious properties of numbers. It is, however, a debatable question whether Eckartshausen is not a greater name in their common subjects than is that of the Unknown Philosopher. He had not, perhaps, so much real genius, if we follow the dictum of Emerson, for he had a lesser quantity of 'unavailableness.' There are, notwithstanding, indications in his writings, and in one especially, that he belonged to a higher order of initiation. *The Cloud on the Sanctuary* is indeed an epoch-making work in mysticism of Christian quality, and it is astonishing that its real significance and importance should have been overlooked by many whose intellectual occupations and interests would have enabled them at least to judge what books are, from their standpoint, vital. The little work is itself a series of letters addressed we know not to whom, it may have even been to Baron de Liebistorf; and it claims indeed to come from the centre of all Christian knowledge, indicating undeclared connections on the part of the writer which we scarcely dare to formulate in precise terms. The statements which it makes are possible only for one who has enjoyed intercourse before which the object sought in the secret masonic rites of Pasqually seems to shrink in dimension. *The Cloud on the Sanctuary* claims, in other words, to be the voice of the Inner Church of Christ affirming the fact of its existence, and in such terms that the ordinary guarantees of evidence seem hardly to be longer necessary. Never had the Higher Christian Theology put forth its claims more clearly, more profoundly, or with more allurement of suggestion. We must unhesitatingly accept this book as marking, in its way, a new era at the dawn of the nineteenth century. It may not be without a purpose, in conformity with the astrology of books, that it was translated for the first time into English on the eve of the twentieth century, in which it will perhaps find its fitting audience and its wider mission. The other writings of Eckartshausen are like the other seership of Germany at the same period—matters which must not be named in the same connection; but they are important in their way, notwithstanding, and it is little short of deplorable that nothing has so far been done to make this remarkable mystic known in proportion as he deserves to those who should be concerned with him in England.

Without exception, unless it be that of Eckartshausen, as to which there is no evidence, all the personages who have been here cited were representatives of the Masonic Fraternities; that is to say, they belonged to one or other of those innumerable orders which at the end of the eighteenth century sought to propagate their particular objects under the mask of Masonry. It was a natural attempt, rather than a device of subtlety, because it was the consequence of a genuine conviction that the rites of Masonry had once at least covered a transcendental secret. It was the design of every such attempt to restore the lost treasures to the rifled Temple. Naturally also, as we have seen, every new rite, representing some one or other of the occult sciences, was regarded as the only genuine Masonry, because each one was actually seeking to manifest what was considered as the true Masonic purpose by the inventor of such rite. It is customary at the present day to speak derisively of the innumerable grades and systems which thus sprang into being, full grown and vested like Minerva. Masonic authorities tell us that they are not real Masonry, which, like some other assurances of the fraternity, does not need much authority to affirm. But they are serviceable for the history of the movement, because they undoubtedly helped to spread it, and because, after all eliminations, if anything remains in Masonry, it is assuredly the transcendental end. At the beginning of the nineteenth century most of these rites had already perished, and so far as regards the external signs of corporate associations, the interests which they represented had seemingly fallen asleep.

It could scarcely be said at the period that they had even awakened in Italy, though we have the authority of Saint-Martin's correspondent, Kirchberger, Baron de Liebistorf, that in 1796 'inward works' were translated into Italian and Spanish even at Rome. The governing centre of the great State Church was too near, the proscription was too rigorous, the penalties were too heavy. All the mysteries were therefore confined within the circle of the Church, and stood or fell by their accommodation to its official dogmas. But even within the domain in which the mystic alone received a charter and enjoyed immunity from danger, there had been seldom any special diffusion of light, and at the period in question it may almost be said that there was none. Church and State were alike distracted, and at such moments the life of contemplation is scarcely possible even in a Trappist monastery. But if there were no mysticism in Italy, there was beneath the ferment on the surface of life an old deposit of superstition, as replete with corruption as the tideless lagoons of Venice. And the exhalations of that sediment were still given up in the shape of grimoires like the Book of Honorius, of black magic and black masses, nameless corruptions for which Petronius could have found no language and Trimalcyon no appetite. Superstitions belong to folk-lore rather than to the side-issues of thought, and such corruptions have no history, or none at least that can be written. Occultism in Italy may be summed up in the one fact that, after a poor attempt to propagate the so-called Egyptian Masonry in Rome, Cagliostro was seized by the Inquisition and died, so far as we can tell, in imprisonment at St. Angelo. The nineteenth century was still within the shadow of the future. Obscure booksellers went on producing and reproducing the grimoires; loathsome priests provided the sacred elements for profanation; occult science, like other sciences, stagnated under the shadow of the Vatican. It is only at the present day, and now only in a minor degree, that Italy has begun to enter into the history of these by-ways.

Under much the same domination there was some difference in Spain at the same period, but this country has at least always possessed a mystical theology because it has had always a fervent devotional spirit. On the one hand, there were St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross, both canonized, and one named the Mystical Doctor; on the other hand, Molinos persecuted, imprisoned, and despoiled; afterwards, as the link between them, Maria d'Agreda, scarcely different from Molinos, but with the voice of the popular feeling on her side, and beatified in consequence. Between the influences of all, Spain could not want her mystics and occasionally produced her adepts, like Martines de Pasqually, but in their particular missions they belonged really to other countries, since they found no field in their own. Spain, therefore, does not enter specially into the subject-matter of this memoir, and, speaking generally, it was the land of bondage rather than of the epopt, notwithstanding that it was in some sense the birthplace, or at least the schoolhouse, of Kabalism, the home of Moses of Cordova and Isaac de Loria. It will serve no purpose to catalogue the countries of Europe which did not contribute anything to these interests at the inception of the era with which we are dealing; to say of Portugal what has been said of Spain; to exhibit how slight was the influence of Jacob Boehme on Silesia, or of Swedenborg on Sweden. The places which do not understand them now did not understand them then. It is curious to observe, that one country from which we should expect nothing, seemingly offers something to our purpose, though it can be told in a few words. The occult movement does appear to have passed from France into Russia. The only fact of importance is that the emissary was Saint-Martin, and this fact, which was unknown to all his earlier biographers, has only transpired recently. The inquisitive mind of the Empress Catherine seems to have created the opportunity, and the advantage said to have been taken of it was the propagation of the Semi-Masonic rite which once bore the name of Saint-Martin. The result is almost unknown, and, indeed, the latter circumstance remains to some extent in uncertainty, and, it may even be added, under suspicion.

If we turn now to England, we shall find that matters here show some contrasts and some similarities in comparison with France at the same epoch. Among the contrasts is the fact that there had been no such activity as was found across the channel in 1789. Cagliostro was welcomed, it is said, by the Masons in London, and given the place of honour to which his status in the craft entitled him; his biography also was published by a contemporary, but his claims did not move the English mind. On the other hand, Saint-Martin found good friends in England, and retained loving memories thereof. The inference is that, while there was not much love of the marvellous, or inclination to be deluded by a splendid adventurer with a budget of prodigies, or much field for novelties in Masonry, there was at the period a certain school of deeper Christian thought in England, and this was assuredly the case, nor is its interest slight or its claim to be passed over lightly. It was the school of William Law, of Jane Lead, and of Pordage. It was also the school of Jacob Boehme, within which the vast English translation of his works was undertaken. It offered conspicuous differences from the French school of Christian thought, even when modified by Saint-Martin in the Boehme interest. It lacks the colour and the richness; it savours of the nonconformist 'broken meat and garlic.' Divorced as he was in his heart from all official ecclesiasticism, and closed by his principles to the devotional impression of the senses, Saint-Martin has always something, nevertheless, of the odour of the sanctuary, and he suggests the Graal even when he denies the Sacrament. But the English school had directness, strength, and clearness—in a word, all that which the

French philosopher never succeeded in obtaining, strive as he might, and there is evidence that he did strive; it was wanting also in Mambrini, was deficient even in Eckartshausen. It must, unfortunately, be added that this directness was purchased as it is almost always purchased, and that to state it is really another way of saying that the school in question remained more in the letter, and was therefore less profound. There is palpable proof in both cases. No one has read Saint-Martin and dreamed that he was other than a mystic; thousands and tens of thousands have read and drawn something of spiritual life from Law's *Serious Call* without ever suspecting that the author had a tinge of mysticism or had a hand in the production of the works of Boehme in English. In the most popular of all his writings there is nothing to suggest Law's acquaintance with the *Mysterium Magnum*, or with a deeper 'morning redness' than that of the eastern horizon. Some other members of the school, and Jane Lead as an instance, were more openly and unmistakably mystical, but their books are more of the visionary order and do not offer very much of solid substance to the inward needs of the mind.

Another analogy between France and England at the beginning of the nineteenth century is found in the secret associations which existed here. They existed, of course, on a very minor scale. There was no period at which they could be said to have flourished, with all deference to the estimation in which some people to-day hold the Rosicrucian revelations of John Heydon. But if they ever flourished, they were then languishing. We must remember, of course, that it was England who gave to the world the secret initiation of Masonry, but the mysticism which was inherent therein was confined to a few symbols and a great dramatic mystery, while no one then had and few now possess any real notion as to how it obtained them. Outside the symbols, and apart from any forced construction of the legends, the highest object of English Masonry was the diffusion of simple ethics, having much the same governing motives as those of any society for mutual improvement and edification in any village of the kingdom. It was not till the art had passed over the English Channel that it assumed another aspect, and this has never been acknowledged by the Craft, except in the minds of a few.

The societies which did exist, and were, as I have said, stagnant, were not native growths, and to both of them a very curious history attaches. One was the Brotherhood of the Rosicrucians and the other the Templar chivalry. If we take the case of the former, it is very difficult to determine the date on which this German association entered England. We know that Robert Fludd created an interest concerning it by an apology which appeared very soon after the first accounts were made public concerning the fraternity. We know also that Fludd's enthusiasm was originally awakened through a visit paid him in England by the alchemist Michael Maier. We have no means of determining whether this person was himself at the time a member of the brotherhood; on the whole, however, the balance is against such a possibility, and it seems certain, in any case, that he imparted no knowledge, from the historical standpoint, supposing that he possessed any, to the Kentish philosopher. Some years after the death of Fludd we find John Heydon affirming that the fraternity was then dwelling in Wales, but the whole account is obviously mythical. About the same time we have the one mystic of England who would have been selected on *à priori* grounds as the most likely to hold a high place in such an institution, going out of his way to state that he did not belong to it. It has been argued that, by the rules of the Order, this course would have been incumbent on him in any case, which is true enough if the laws published by Sigmund Richter in Germany, late in the eighteenth century, are to be taken seriously; but even then the circumstances attending the denial of Thomas Vaughan were not sufficient to occasion its necessity in the absence of its truth. From the period of Thomas Vaughan to that of Elias Ashmole we hear nothing of the Order. The Oxford antiquary who has told us that in things hermetic he knew enough to hold his tongue but not enough to speak, appears to have been acquainted with an obscure wandering alchemist and Rosicrucian, whose confidant he became, and it is reported that, about the same time, Sir William Moray, a personal friend of Vaughan, together with Desaguilier and others had become members of the fraternity. As these persons are important in connection with early Masonry, it is supposed by some that the Craft assumed its symbolical aspect under their guidance, and was thus a kind of transformed Rosicrucianism. It is well known, however, that this view is not accepted by the majority of Masonic authorities, but the truth is that Masonry has next to no history at the period of its appearance, and if on the one hand there is good evidence wanting to the Ashmole theory, it is equally certain that most of the materials available in the interests of the alternative view also abound in difficulties. Perhaps the most serious thing which can be advanced against the former is the undoubted fact that more than one Rosicrucian fraternity independent of Masonry is traceable long after the development of the Craft degrees, and a considerable distance into the nineteenth century. One of the witnesses is Godfrey Higgins, and he tells us expressly that he refused initiation because he required freedom for his researches. The Society in question, or one of a similar character, held its meetings, after the death of Higgins, at a Fleet Street tavern.

What connection, if any, it possessed with the German Order, supposing the latter to have been in corporate existence when the report of it first went forth, there is no evidence to determine, but it went on languishing till about the year 1850, when the last of the brethren are said to have died. Persons still living, who were once in touch with these members, and are now presumably their inheritors, acknowledge that the historical continuity has been broken, as there are no records of the early meetings; yet it is interesting to add that any heritage which they possessed is not supposed to have perished, but to have passed into safe hands.

The Templar encampments, which are also mentioned by Godfrey Higgins, who, for similar reasons, abstained from joining these, were in much the same position. They were in existence before the year 1830, and there is not much doubt that they were a survival from the previous century; but, unlike the Rosicrucians, they have not fallen practically into abeyance, but have fully recovered their vitality, and are still in evidence, with greatly increased prestige, among the high degrees of Masonry. As such, they scarcely belong to the by-ways of secret association at the present day. It was to some extent different at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when their history is doubtful and legendary. We may speculate whether the Order of the Temple, as we now know it, was imported from France by political refugees of the Revolution, for we have little evidence concerning it prior to that period, or whether it was actually a survival of the old chivalry in Great Britain. Unfortunately, we can only speculate, not, as it may at least be hoped, because the materials for a decision are entirely wanting, but because learned research has not said its last word on these vexed questions.

The Rosicrucian fraternity had not yet wholly disintegrated, nor had the Templar encampments awakened from the mystery of sleep, when a book was published in the French language, in London, by one who signed himself 'Clerk in Holy Orders,' an exiled abbé, a derelict of the French Revolution, who had found an obscure asylum in England. Unknown, rather than forgotten, this work is perhaps one of the most bizarre which was ever issued from the press of a London printer, and its clumsy title is in keeping with much of its matter. *What we have been, what we are, what we shall become*, written by the Abbé Fournié, appeared in the first days of the nineteenth century. The reviews of the period contain no mention of the fact. Probably it fell dead from the press, which is scarcely surprising, because it is quite certain that no one would have understood it who was on the staff of the literary journals of that time. This work contains the doctrine of Martines de Pasqually, as it would appear after passing through the alembic of the mind of a catholic priest. If it were nothing more than this it would be exceedingly interesting for purposes of comparison with the same doctrine as it was developed by Saint-Martin, who had few clerical sympathies and was nurtured on a Lutheran method of self-knowledge; but it is much more than this—it contains an account of the author's familiar relations with Pasqually, including a narrative of communications held with that personage years after he had passed away in the flesh. However we may regard its story, or the doctrine which it develops, this almost unheard of treatise is the most remarkable contribution to transcendentalism made in England during the early part of the nineteenth century. The author died, as he had lived, in obscurity, and we have no record as to the date. He belongs, of course, to the school of Christian mysticism. His transparent sincerity is one of his most conspicuous merits, and though it is easy to regard him as hallucinated, there is very little in his pages to give colour to this supposition, except to those for whom experiences such as he relates spell only delusion or imposture. It must be added that he does not present the philosophical or doctrinal side of the school of Pasqually in a manner which would dispose us to regard it as, even from its own standpoint, a truly philosophical system. He may be said, indeed, to misrepresent it, and it is certain, at least, that he tinged it, but there are many aspects in which he seems nearer to Pasqually than Saint-Martin, who originated more than he derived. There are striking points of likeness, outside the general drift of teaching, between the work which we have been discussing and Pasqually's long unpublished treatise concerning the *Reintegration of Beings.* Among the lost treasures, or, at least, the curiosities, of the nineteenth century, it would be fair to include the second part of Fournié's treatise, which was promised but never appeared. The first part itself was held over by the writer for five-and-twenty years, and this, in the absence of corroborative testimony as to the events recorded, is assuredly the best guarantee of a presumptive kind that it was not a work either of haste or violence, and must not, however it may be regarded otherwise, be ranked among the errors of enthusiasm.

With this account of the experience of a Frenchman in London, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, we may contrast a more lamentable history, not inferior in its sincerity, yet not undeservedly characterised as a fanatical delusion; it is that of Joanna Southcote. It is needless to say that all common estimations of this extraordinary victim of hallucination miss all the important points. The historians of her tragedy—which is that of the soul entirely, for she was not in any conspicuous manner a subject of external visitations—have not endeavoured to convict her of imposture, nor have they erred in the general estimates of her hallucination. The most important of the points which have escaped them is that in her insanity as in her shrewdness, and the shrewdness is well attested, she was one of the martyrs of transcendentalism. It is quite impossible for any unbiased student to deny her possession of extraordinary gifts, among which that of prophetic utterance may be named first, since it is of the obvious order. It was because she had those gifts that it was possible for her to be destroyed as she was. Another important matter, and that not so obvious, is that she seems to have passed through many of the inward experiences of older mysticism, as interpreted by the unchallenged authorities of the Latin Church. When she proclaimed herself to be the bride of the Spirit, it is almost beyond question that she did so on the ground of that experience, and that the latter was similar to much which we hear concerning many early ascetics and saints of the far past. In most of these instances they had the authority of the Church to guide them, and were thus saved from aberration by a direction which, whatever its imperfections, is shrewder than the shrewdest of the mystics. There is reason to believe that her life was altogether exemplary, nor will those who have studied it sympathetically deny her the seal of sanctity. It must be admitted, for the rest, that the Christianity of her period in England which she regarded, by an instinct rare for her period, as only partial and introductory, most assuredly stood in need of completion, and the only regrettable circumstance is, that she was not competent to supply its deficiencies. The success of her mission, the environment of her later life—when the unlettered peasant, daughter of a small farmer in Devonshire, saw herself surrounded by fourteen thousand followers—may indeed have intoxicated her, but no intoxication, and even no ordinary measure of vanity, can render less pitiful and less dreadful the catastrophe of her closing years, when the seeress, believing that she had conceived miraculously, though approaching the age of Sarah, and that she was to bring forth a new avatar, was finally awakened from her vision by the death-agonies of cancer. The pyre of Joan of Arc could scarcely have exceeded that awakening or approached that disillusion. With her sad history closes the first cycle of the movement with which we have been dealing, during the course of the nineteenth century. We see that all its great names, and these are few, while they are not of the greatest, were remainders brought over from the preceding epoch. When these had passed away there were no others to replace them, and all things fell gradually into abeyance. It was a melancholy period for philosophical and intellectual thought. The desolation of the time found voice in the *Obermann* of De Senancour, which reads like the world's dirge over its dead aspirations. The air was resonant with the uproar of thrones falling and the thunder of conflicting empires. The hiatus is filled only by mesmeric phenomena. It has been said that mesmerism is the key of all these secrets, and while there may be a certain sense in which such a statement has an aspect of truth, it should be added that those who were in possession of the key could not discover the lock, or, at least, that the door which had been so far opened was not the right door. At the same time the key of Mesmer was destined before many years had passed away to open one door in the outer world with such consequences, that the sleep of the secret sciences came to an end abruptly, while its awakening was unlike anything in previous centuries.

MESMERISM AND HYPNOTISM

It was in the midst of that subsidence of activity referred to in the previous paper that the first ferment of a new age, characterised by a new departure, began to work in the world. The disillusion was perhaps at its deepest, and the least likely of all places for the first signs of the change, if not certainly always, was then England, where, in spite of certain dispositions, to some extent undetermined, and of rare inspiration, apart from all grace and ecstasy, towards the spiritual life, as already noted, there had been little of the past enthusiasm, and nothing of the phenomenal side. The next act of the motley drama, part mystery and part comedy, was, however, to be enacted here, and it was initiated in the most prosaic, the most reputable, the most temperate of possible manners by the discovery of hypnotism—here and in this land where mesmerism had been at best an exotic. In respect of that particular realm of phenomena which is embraced inaccurately enough by the generic term of the marvellous, England was always, and remains, not only in the position of those who would not believe if one should rise from the dead, but who would scarcely suffer persuasion to move their channels of convention for the purpose of meeting half-way a whole army of the resurrection.

At the present day when, more especially in France, the experimental study of hypnotism has assumed the guise of a purely scientific investigation pursued in several important hospitals, and when, even here in England, it is in regular, if exceptional, practice among medical specialists whose professional position is above all challenge, it may be interesting for a few moments to look back upon its early struggles, at the period when it was appealing for recognition in this country. Hypnotism had not only to encounter and live down the opposition of the medical and scientific worlds, but also to displace a rival which had come into the field before it. That rival was Mesmerism, or Animal Magnetism, and the competition was none the less keen, because then, as indeed now, it was to some extent uncertain whether the two processes were not fundamentally identical.

The school of mesmerism in England may be said to have originated in the course of the year 1829, with the publication, in the *London Medical and Physical Journal*, of some articles on the subject by Richard Chenevix, F.R.S., as the result of experiments which had been undertaken by himself. These experiments were witnessed by various members of the medical profession, and, among these, led to the conversion of Dr. Elliotson, whose sufferings in support of the unpopular cause form an instructive chapter in its history. Some years passed away, and, in 1836, J. C. Colquhoun published his once well-known work, *Isis Revelata*, which is a summary history of animal magnetism up to the year 1831, when the second French commission issued its memorable report on the subject. In the same year the Baron du Potet visited London, being perhaps the most successful operator who had yet appeared in France. Indeed, from Mesmer to Puséygur, from Puséygur to De Leuze, and from De Leuze to Du Potet, these are the three epochs, in so far as France is concerned, of that art which was said by the most devoted of its followers to have done more towards the explanation of man and the universe than any other discovery of the century to which it belongs. Du Potet gave public demonstrations, and we notice again the presence of Dr. Elliotson, who now undertook some researches on his own account, and published their result in the *Lancet*. The high position which he occupied at the time gave great prominence to his views, and they excited much discussion and bitter hostility, from which he emerged, professionally speaking, a ruined man. But, gifted as he was with a peculiar tenacity of purpose, and withstanding, if he did not overcome, all the opposition, he was the recognised centre of the movement, within which a small but useful literature began to grow up. Townshend's *Facts in Mesmerism;* Esdaile's Account of its Curative Powers, as proved by his Mesmeric Hospital in India; Elliotson's *Cases of Surgical Operation without Pain in the Mesmeric Sleep;* Gregory's *Letters on Animal Magnetism*, became and remain among standard works of reference, to which appeal on the subject is still made, and not without justice.

The English school sought its explanation of the phenomena in the hypothesis of Mesmer himself, namely, that animals exercise an influence one upon another, at a distance and otherwise, by the projection or diffusion of a subtle fluid which was compared to the action of the magnet on iron; and about this there was for a long time no division of opinion. Those who believed in the phenomena accepted the explanation concerning them, while those who rejected the latter challenged the alleged evidences. But in the year 1841 a remarkable innovation arose which was destined to throw a fresh light upon the experiments, and to inaugurate the scientific investigation, with, finally, general acceptance of many facts which had long been the subject of derision on the part of scientific men. In that year the Swiss mesmerist La Fontaine came to England and gave public demonstrations all over the country, including the town of Manchester. There James Braid, a Scottish surgeon of some exceptional ability, had settled recently, and his curiosity, or rather his scepticism, drew him to the meetings of La Fontaine, with the object of discovering how the manifestations were produced. He found, however, that he was not in the presence of occurrences which were the result of collusion, as he had expected, but that some at least of the phenomena were genuine. He then betook himself to the first-hand study of the experiments, with the idea of ascertaining the agency at work in their production. Prior to his investigations, the peculiar pathological conditions understood by the mesmeric state were supposed to require, of necessity, the presence of an operator, and on the hypothesis of a projected fluid, it would be impossible for it to be otherwise. But Braid discovered that an operator was not essential, and he produced, under the name of Hypnotism, similar effects, which at the time he regarded as identical, by simply fixing the attention of the subject on some bright object. When he published the result of his observations and his reflections thereupon in his little work on *Neurypnology, or the Rationale of Nervous Sleep*, he abandoned the identity of the conditions induced by the two processes, but, from his later writings, there is ground for believing that he had not really reached any definite conclusion.

While Elliotson was a man, as we have seen, of very high reputation and position, Braid had only a local practice, with a certain more extended status through his skill in the treatment of club-feet. But the man of influence lost caste altogether, while the more humble surgeon became famous. The explanation is not to be sought in the cross-purposes of fortune; in the one case, an unpopular cause was championed by a person who, except by the repetition of experiments, cast no further light thereon; in the other, an original genius found a new explanation which made it possible to accept at least a section of the facts, without reference to a hypothesis which was everywhere regarded as unscientific because it was thought transcendental. It would not, however, be correct to assume that Braid's discovery was at once welcomed in all the medical circles. The chief organ of the profession may be said never to have mentioned it during his lifetime, though it took it for granted when his obituary appeared in its columns. There was silence also for years in another camp, which there is no need to say was that of the mesmerists. It does not follow that individual exponents of the older process did not recognise the importance of Braid's discovery, but it was disliked by the central authority. Dr. Elliotson had suffered too long and too severely to allow willingly a cause, which, for him at least, had become sacred in his own person, to be thus rationalised and explained away.

The hypnotic method, despite its professional welcome, and despite the opposition of the so-called transcendental school, was in connection with some of the tenets of that school more intimately than its discoverer imagined at the inception. He was not long, however, in learning or perceiving that his process was akin to other processes which rank among the wonders of the past. He came to realise that self-hypnotism had been performed more or less by Fakirs, Yogis, Ascetics, and even Saints of every land and most religious dispensations.

When he first entranced a subject by means of his gold pencil-case or the head of his lancet, he reproduced inadvertently the artificial method by which Jacob Boehme entered into what has been called the 'interior condition'; but the *éblouissement* or trouble of the eye is not the only means of entering either into that state or into the condition of hypnotism. When Braid laid stress on the necessity of fixing the attention, he might have known that the fixing of the eyes was only a pretext or a safeguard. He learned this afterwards, when he found that he could hypnotise the blind.

While the phenomena of artificial somnambulism and the cataleptic trance were being reduced by Braid into science, animal magnetism may be fairly described as running riot in America, so great was the confusion of operation and theory, so indiscriminate were the things concluded from the facts produced, so sensational were the claims, and possibly the honest beliefs, of its ill-balanced exponents. The hypnotic fluid of Mesmer became in their hands no longer an invisible projection from one animal to another. The whole universe was permeated with the substance which the operator was supposed to dispense to his subject, and God Himself was spoken of as the universal mesmerist, much as at a slightly anterior period, and in another school, the Great Architect of the Universe was denominated the first Freemason. Scarcely had the subject been rendered superficially scientific and respectable by a matter of fact explanation, which ruled out the so-called higher phenomena, than a new process crossed the Atlantic, to make shipwreck of all the proprieties, in the shape of Electro-Biology, a name chosen with the peculiar tact which governs American vocabularies, and involving a double misdescription, as the phenomena were not electric and not more exclusively biological than the process of digestion. This notwithstanding, the new nondescript, exotic of unreason as it seemed, really involved something which, if not overlooked by Braid, had received little prominence in his researches, or was not at least regarded from the most salient point of view. This was suggestion in the waking state. There can be no doubt that Grimes, the supposed inventor of Electro-Biology, and the itinerant lecturers who had come over to demonstrate his process, at least assisted Braid to realise a point which he had shunned, and first under the spirit of vigilance as to his parental rights over his own invention, and next with something derived from his own unconfessed borrowers, he reduced the subject to its proper proportions. Unfortunately, or otherwise, for all the interests involved, hypnotism itself was destined to be made obsolete for the time being, almost at its commencement, by the discovery of anæsthetics, which are far simpler in their operation and far more certain in their results. Here it must be remembered that the new psychological agent was almost exclusively presented for its curative powers and for its aids to surgery. Within the professional sphere, Braid, however, was a man of open mind, and he recognised the advantage of ether and chloroform in these special respects, without at the same time abating the superior claim of his own agent in more important directions than those of mere facility.

Towards the close of his life the report of experiments by the Austrian Baron von Reichenbach reached this country. These were designed to demonstrate quite unconsciously the very antithesis of Braid's discovery, namely, the existence of a fluid or emanation given off by animals and human beings, and by other objects which need not be enumerated, but including the graves of departed persons. He conducted his experiments with a great number of subjects who, he found, had the faculty of perceiving the alleged emanations, and there is no doubt that his patience and care were infinite. He seems in particular to have avoided as far as possible any suggestion of that which he expected to his subjects, though none of these could enter into a second experiment without being aware of its object. This unavoidably was a weak point in his researches, and Braid took up the matter accordingly, exposing the fallacy of his conclusion, while paying an admiring compliment to his skill and to the importance of his facts within a more limited range, namely, that of suggestion. It was the fashion of the moment in England to reduce all medical theses to the smallest dimensions and to publish them in the most unobtrusive form. Braid's counter-experiments, after appearing in a second-rate journal, because the ruling organ of the profession would not have received them with welcome, reappeared in a minute pamphlet closely and painfully set. Beside the enormous volumes of Reichenbach it must have looked so unserious as to be little short of ludicrous, and the Austrian baron seems to have left the Manchester surgeon to be disposed of by his English disciples, among whom were Ashburner and Gregory. There was, therefore, no explicit reply to the ingenious arguments and experiments of James Braid. Reichenbach continued to believe that he had demonstrated the existence of a new imponderable, and at the present day, in view of the researches in France of Colonel de Rochas and his school of investigators, while it is certain that Reichenbach was wrong in some material points of fact, it would be difficult to determine conclusively with whom the truth rested.

The lessons which may be derived from the early history of the several processes in England are at once encouraging and disconcerting. They illustrate that natural and, we may hope, ineradicable sobriety which so invariably disposes the English mind to the middle way in which safety for the most part lies, and in which truth is found occasionally. Sobriety of this kind is essentially of the scientific spirit. But it illustrates also, and this is not less true because it is a commonplace, that the reticence and reluctance of the middle way, and the scientific caution which in itself is so salutary, are subject to observable excesses of intolerance, the results of which have been not infrequently regrettable. The treatment of Dr. Elliotson, at the hands of men who were professionally his brethren, must be regarded as an instance to the point, after due allowance for the fact that a peculiar temperament may have predisposed him to aggravate rather than disarm the hostility which took arms against him. Except for the moral it conveys, the personal question is not now of any real consequence; it is now nearly true to say that, in England at least, 'no man suffers loss or bleeds' for scientific experiments or theories. Moreover, the memory at least of Elliotson has in these later days received a tardy but altogether honourable exculpation. The great majority of his facts have been fully substantiated by research, especially in France, and it has therefore been demonstrated that he suffered mainly because he was in the right. There is no higher compensation for suffering than a demonstration of this kind. Unfortunately, time has also shown that in mesmerism as in hypnotism the field of experiment is restricted, so far as the medical standpoint is concerned, and the instinct which dissuaded the profession from recognising the one and which caused it to welcome the other, because it reduced the one, was, so far, a true instinct. There are other points of criticism from which it is possible to approach it for the discovery of much larger issues, and as these issues have been heretofore scarcely put forward, perhaps the process is in its infancy. It is for the moment out of place here to make more particular reference to these possibilities, but the key has been already given in the reference to Jacob Boehme and the almost fortuitous manner in which his lucidity was usually induced by the simple contemplation of bright objects, such even as were offered to his notice within the humble precincts of his own kitchen. It is this key which would justify us in regarding hypnotism as an outward threshold of intentness, though, as such, it does not lead into the Hidden Temple.

THE SAVIOURS OF LOUIS XVII

A ROMANTIC interest attaches to Royal Pretenders, almost independently of the inherent value of their claims. Perkin Warbeck has figured as the hero of fiction scarcely in a less degree than the Duke of Monmouth, while the several Stuart Pretenders have offered endless opportunities to romance, from the days of Sir Walter Scott to our own. So far, however, as English literature at least is concerned, there is one line of claimants which has been hitherto overlooked, though in some respects the most interesting of all. I refer to the alleged survival of the French Dauphin, who, but for the misfortune of his dynasty, should have been crowned at Rheims as Louis xvii.

The temperate and occasionally, if it must be confessed, the frigid zones of thought in which we live and move and have our intellectual being at the present day, are far removed from the regions of collective enthusiasms and hallucinations, of white heats of conviction and prejudice, in a word, of the mania which characterised more than one popular and many disguised and secret movements in the past. The party feeling which sometimes runs high among us is but a bubble on the tide of sentiment in comparison with the geyser-springs and water-spouts of the old passions of mobs, and, in their degree also, even of sects, coteries, and obscure cabals. For this reason our politics in the twentieth century are sensibly distinguished from our religious fervours, if, indeed, we possess any zeal of the latter kind, apart from the remanents and recrudescences of the sectarian spirit. In the eighteenth century, and especially at the period of the French Revolution, it was otherwise. Through the operation of some causes less or more obvious, the politics of that day, above all in the land of the Revolution, bore all the marks and seals by which we diagnose conspiracy, and for some concealed reason the man who was planning the ruin or the glory of his country had to begin by becoming an *Illuminé* of sorts, or at least a member of some organised secret society. In this way a political motive was imported into many associations which by their express or imputed objects cared nothing for Cæsar, if Cæsar left them in peace; and in this way also the politician or the political conspirator became tinctured undesignedly by the craze which he had adopted as a disguise for the better attainment of his ends. To the articles of association, so to speak, by which the French Revolution was incorporated, the contributories were gathered from the Brethren of the Rose-Cross, the Martinist Lodges of Lyons, the Rites of Perfection, Societies of Philalethes, *Illuminés* of Avignon, and disbanded *Illuminati* of Germany. In addition to being political conspirators, they were in certain cases profound believers in the tenets of their particular associations, and in the absence of their frenzy for a new social order—for Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity—they might not have been saved from religious mania. The political enthusiast did, as a fact, become occasionally the religious *halluciné*.

The movement which is here designated broadly as that of the Saviours of Louis XVII. was, of course, as its name suggests, political at its inception, but being also enthusiastic—and French—it became visionary, and once visionary it received in due course the particular attestations which are supposed to reside in signs and wonders. As a fact, it is *par excellence* the great thaumaturgic chapter in later French history. It possessed not only *la vraie légitimité*, with the ordinary paraphernalia of seership, clairvoyance, and gifts of prophecy which in a circle of zealots could and did mostly develop at that period, but its alleged tangible miracles, its divine messages, and its inspired revelations. It must be regarded as something much exceeding the typical history of enthusiasm tempered by imposture. That was no ordinary hysteria and no common charlatanry which converted a fanatical handful of royalist loyal servitors into a religious sect which possessed its literature; which had once at least its ceremonial, its symbolism, and its sacraments; which was distinguished, in one of its phases, by special condemnation in a papal bull, and has produced a number of transformations, one at least of which exists at the present day; which, in fine, has given rise to half the histories of Black Magic and of nameless orgies that for so long a time have been current in France. It has provided true material for the phantasias of M. Jules Bois, practical suggestions for the romances of Huysmann, and a colourable pretence to at least one existing secret society.

When it is said that there were persons who loved to regard themselves as Saviours of Louis xvii., it is clear that, in their opinion, the unhappy child of Louis xvi. and Marie Antoinette did not die in his prison, as official history affirms. Nor will any well-informed person fail to be aware that the possibility of his survival and escape has received considerable countenance. It is natural that this should be the case, because there is a romantic element in such a supposition, while at the same time it is not a notion which does open violence to probability. These facts once realised, no one will need to be reminded that they were very liable to create pretenders whose credentials were of less account than those of Perkin Warbeck, whom I have already mentioned. As in the course of this history the Saviours of the Dauphin had more than one grandson of St. Louis raised up to them, no doubt they experienced the realisation of this danger. We must not, however, regard their enthusiasm as unreasonable in itself. Supposing the Dauphin to have escaped, his jailers, on all accounts, might have spread the report of his death, in order to shield themselves from the consequences of their negligence, real or supposed, while those to whom they were responsible could scarcely have contradicted that report, but would rather have insisted upon it, ostensibly at least, whatever their private knowledge, because it helped to make the survival of the Dauphin without political consequence. He became dead as a danger to themselves, though not dead in the body, for the difficulty in establishing his identity would be probably insuperable, and it would be enough to say that he was an impostor. The test question is, therefore, whether the Saviours of Louis xvii. could or did offer to produce any evidence worthy of the name as to the escape of their idol. If they did, they established, at least, their initial title to existence. It would not follow that the person whom they accepted was in fact the escaped prince, and the heir of Hugh Capet, for the true heir may have been only too glad to hide himself in obscurity, equally from friends and enemies.

This test question, however, like so many others which arise in the by-ways of history, is not one which is determinable, if at all, without long and difficult investigations; but the King's Saviours are not the less curious as a sect, and are perhaps the more interesting, if we agree that they were deceived grossly by every one of their pretenders. We may speak, indeed, of the Dauphin's survival and escape as of the second legend of the Temple, and this reminds us that there was a first legend, which arose prior to the Revolution, in the shape of the claim made on behalf of the Knights Templar to a survival after their suspension in the thirteenth century. It has been said that the Templars were avenged in the person of the Dauphin, that the French King who had immolated the innocent Grand Master Jacques de Molay suffered, in the body of his descendant, imprisonment, torture, and misery of all kinds in the very tower which was once the patrimony of that old chivalry of Europe. Some writers have lingered suggestively over this piece of poetical justice, as they have ventured to term it. We may note the coincidence because it has been regarded as significant by those whose disposition it is to find meaning in strange accidents, and to trace the hand of God in several obscure events of history. But there is another coincidence which, though it has escaped them, so far as I am aware, ought from their standpoint to lay considerable stress upon the claims of the King's Saviours. The first legend of the Temple, at least in one of its varieties, supposes that, in surviving its destruction, the Order became Freemasonry, the secret design of which was to vindicate the cause of the knights, and that this end was ultimately accomplished by the realisation of the French Revolution. And so also, according to the second legend of the Temple, the French monarchy survived the alleged onslaught of Freemasonry in the person of the Dauphin, as if to show that, after so many generations, wrath is not visited utterly, even by the secret societies.

After what manner it was that the escape of Louis XVII. first became bruited abroad we have no means of ascertaining, but it found believers speedily who were willing to live and die for it. As I have spoken of a line of claimants, it follows that the impostors were many, and of these some were so obscure that they have passed practically out of memory. It will be readily supposed that, even in the days of Robespierre and the Reign of Terror, more than one handful of concealed Royalists dreamed of the rescue of the Dauphin while he was still unquestionably alive. Among these there was a member of some obscure society of visionaries which goes back to the year 1772, a certain Sieur Ducy, the recorder of many prophecies and revelations, who, in common with his partisans, believed that the future of the world could be secured only by the conservation of the true legitimacy in the person of the future Louis XVII. In all more than seven or eight Dauphins, bearing marks of authenticity sufficient for the purpose of their believers, arose at different times, including one very curious case which transpired rather than was put forward in America. It has been suggested, not without reason, that some of the loyal servitors of the destroyed dynasty were wrought up to such a pitch of frenzy by the desire of an object before whom they could pour out their loyalty, that they were ready and eager to accept almost any pretender. They scarcely required testimony; they recognised, they were convinced, and it was enough. Long after the period had passed when it was possible, humanly speaking, for the Dauphin to have been still alive, one such zealot is reported to have affirmed his supreme assurance that God could raise him from the dead. The fervency and fever with which such beliefs were cherished gave rise ultimately in France to three sects, in part political and in part religious, whose tenets in common were :—

(*a*) The perpetuation of the legitimate line.

(*b*) The foundation of an universal monarchy, which was to guarantee the social order of the future, with France as the leader of the nations.

(*c*) The interposition of a special providence for the fulfilment of the designs of the Saviours.

From this programme, it follows that these sects carried on the old dream concerning universal monarchy which for centuries had haunted most of the seers of France; which is found in the writings of William Postel at the period of the Council of Trent, and, earlier still, in those of the Abbot Trithemius. The sects in question are:—

1. The propaganda of Ganneau, who took the mystery name of Mapah, and of Catherine Theot, who was his spiritual spouse.

2. That of Eugéne Vintras, who is *par excellence* the priest and prophet of those Saviours who accepted the claims of Naundorff.

3. That of Louis Michel de Figanières, the last development of the hallucinations of Vintras.

Of this triad Ganneau has passed completely away, except in so far as he is remembered in the person of his disciple A. L. Constant, better known under his Jewish pseudonym of Éliphas Lévi, who, as a young man, perambulated France, preaching the gospel of his master, publishing pamphlet-Bibles of Liberty, with wonderful visions of pontiffs and kings to come, and enduring from time to time even imprisonment in the cause. He is remembered also to some extent in the once interesting personality of Alphonse Esquiros, who fell within the same circle of enthusiasm, and made his contribution to the literature and history of this strange movement in France. We know nothing of the doctrine of Ganneau, except through a single reference in the writings of A. L. Constant. His identity with Louis XVII., which was the final secret revealed to his disciples, rests on his own statement simply, and there is no evidence that it was believed by the more intelligent among his followers, even in the days of their pupilage. In this claim he proved himself a maniac rather than an impostor, and, for the rest, he must be classed in that order of squalid prophets of which some antitypes have been given us in England, in the shape of the Muggletons and Brothers, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. If he can be said ever to have issued from obscurity, he returned rapidly therein; some of his disciples, at least, came to their senses, and he himself passed away, leaving his spiritual spouse still on earth and still apparently possessed with the belief that she was actually Marie Antoinette, of whom it is said that she appeared to external observation as the living image. The fact that she would have been, in this case, the mother of her own husband does not appear to have created any serious difficulty.

The second sect is that which recognised the one claimant whose pretension has enlisted the sincere conviction of several generations, not altogether hallucinated, in France; that claimant is Charles Edward Naundorff, or, as he styled himself, the Duc de Normandie, who arrived in Paris from Prussia in the year 1833, was, in 1836, banished from France by Louis Philippe for instituting a lawsuit in Paris against the deposed King Charles x. to extort an acknowledgment that he was his nephew; who sought refuge thereupon, like so many other royal and political exiles, in England, and during his sojourn here lived chiefly in Camberwell; who in the end died on August 10, 1845, at Delft, in Holland, as he personally believed, of poison, and was buried as Louis xvii. This, in brief outline, is the historical and undisputed side of Naundorff's history. By his own testimony he remembered, of course, his captivity, and told its story with details which for his followers had all the air of realism. An impostor with ability might do as much. He bore also an extraordinary likeness to his alleged father, and, what is more, he had the general family characteristics, possibly in a marked degree. Recognitions of this kind remind one of the spirit-photographs which under lamentable circumstances have been claimed by bereaved relatives as undoubted portraits of those whom they have lost; in other words, sobriety is too often wanting to this kind of recognition. But it has been said further that his old jailers at the end of their days confessed to him, and that the convictions which his appearance excited, among others who had reason to know, were too fervent, too wholehearted, too supreme for them to be lightly challenged. Now, it must be admitted that this taxes overmuch the convenient hypothesis of a treacherous and easy memory.

Collective hallucination is possible, when speaking broadly, but to introduce it as an explanation of facts which are awkward and unwelcome is a little childish as a resource, and seems to substitute the ridiculous for the unlikely. Nothing of any importance now attaches to the possible survival of the ill-starred prince of the Temple; nothing now attaches to the honesty of Naundorff, who is dead, indeed, like St. Louis; and supposing the romance of the French monarchy to have been founded in substantial fact, it is an event without consequence. A heavy balance of probability must, doubtless, be registered against the claims of Naundorff, but we can afford to postpone judgment till it is warranted by further research, if this should ever be made in a purely historical spirit. The most accessible source of information for English readers cannot be included in this desirable category, because it is the work of a partisan related by family ties to the Dauphin as he was discovered in America, though this person never appeared as a claimant.

Naundorff left memoirs behind him which have appeared in English, and although they do not at the present day command any form of conviction, they are exceedingly curious reading, and are supported by an array of documents which are at least a testimony to the very serious belief of those who deposed to them. He also left behind him one son, the survivor of five children. This son was living towards the end of the last century; there are grandchildren who may still be surviving, and for many years their cause was represented in France by a weekly newspaper, once edited by the Abbé Duprey, under the title of *La Légitimité*.

Such are the broad facts of the claim, and they are less or more familiar to many persons who are acquainted with the side-issues of French history. What is less generally known is that Naundorff, outside his political pretensions, has figured also as a kind of religious visionary, and was the author of books for which he claimed an inspired origin. One of these, under the title of *The Heavenly Doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ*, appeared in 1839, and has, I believe, been translated into English. He wrote also three similar works during his sojourn in England, but these are so rare at the present day as to be practically out of reach. They constituted, in any case, for those who accepted his pretension, text-books of religious belief, and in this way the so-called Duc de Normandie was not only the real representative of the true Bourbon legitimacy, who was naturally as such the rightful heir of the French throne, but was one also whose political mission had received, for those who could tolerate it, the seal of a more exalted sanction. This is strange enough, but it will suggest only to the ordinary mind that Naundorff was hallucinated rather than a simple impostor. Still stranger, however, is the fact, real or alleged, that long before he himself became the recipient of supposed revelations, and long also before he advanced any claim to recognition as the son of Louis xvi., a poor peasant of Northern France, named Martin de Gallardon, after a prosaic life passed among the fields for something like half a century, became suddenly the victim of visions, revelations, and premonitory advices from the unseen world, all of which were designed to lead up to the recognition of Naundorff, not merely as the true sovereign of France, but as one who was destined to restore and even increase the glories of that monarchy. These extraordinary experiences began on January 15, 1816, when Martin was visited for the first time by an apparition which claimed subsequently to be the Archangel Raphael. He was charged with messages to be delivered to Louis xviii., who was at that time the occupant of the French throne. The peasant was disturbed in his conscience by this unlooked-for visitation; he consulted his curé and the curé consulted his bishop, with the result that the case of Martin was reported to the police authorities and he was ultimately placed for a time in the asylum of Charenton. He persisted, however, throughout in the conviction that he would see the king and would deliver to him the messages with which he had been entrusted; and, as a matter of fact, this interview, against all probability as it was, took place on April 2 of the same year. In the course of the audience Martin informed Louis xviii. that, although lawfully he was a royal prince, he was not the legitimate occupant of the throne of France. In the end the peasant was allowed to return to his native village, and there he remained, still visited at unequal intervals by the same apparition and still under the special charge of the priest for the time being of his district. In 1830 the voice told him that the Dauphin was in Germany, and in conformity with this prognostication it has been proved that Naundorff was about that time at Crossen, in Silesia. In 1833 he was similarly informed that the legitimate king was in France, and this, as we have already seen, was the year when Naundorff repaired to that country from Prussia. In the same extraordinary manner Martin was made acquainted with various signs by which he would recognise the prince, and when at last a meeting took place between them, the prophetic assurances which he had received in this respect are affirmed to have been more than verified. On April 16, 1834, the life of Martin came suddenly to a close, and there is little doubt that the story of his death by poison and strangulation combined may have been only too well founded. It has been suggested that the unfortunate peasant was simply the dupe of the sect who were bent on securing the recognition of their claimant, but the facts are against this view; he was, therefore, either an impostor or the victim of hallucinations, some of which may be classed with those which are nowadays termed veridic. In this connection it is curious to note that the visionary experiences which befell Naundorff himself took place only after the death of the seer who had been, so to speak, his precursor.

But despite the visions and the prophecies of Martin, despite also the revelations and inspirations of Naundorff, the Saviours of Louis xvii., even in the lifetime of their master, stood apparently in need of further signs and wonders to enforce the divine nature of their mission, and they found them, possibly more fully than they expected, in the person of another peasant, Eugène Vintras of Normandy, who is described as originally a pious and illiterate person, mentally somewhat weak and disposed towards enthusiasm. In all probability he knew as much and as little of the second legend of the Temple as did Joe Smith of that obscure and worthless novel which has been claimed as the first matter of the *Book of Mormon*, with its mysterious tablets of brass. But among the pleasant fields of France the angel came to him, as he came, *ex hypothesi*, to one similarly unequipped in England, sending him on strange errands with strange messages, the purport of which he pretends not to have understood. In some undeclared manner they were all connected with *La Vraie Légitimité*, and proved acceptable to the Saviours scattered through the country on the eve of the *coup d'état*. Vintras seems to have been a similar product in France to Andrew Jackson Davis in America. In order to hear him with some show of seriousness, we have to accept it as a fact, firstly, that he was wholly uneducated, on which point we have indeed the authority of independent French criticism; and, secondly, that the notions which he disseminated were quite beyond his own unaided possibility. There are certain respects in which he must have outrun even the sanguine enthusiasm of the King's Saviours, and, as time went on, his frenzy lost sight altogether of the Dauphin and the Duc de Normandie, for Vintras posed ultimately as the religious prophet of a new sacerdotal order. What he preached was the Coming of the King and the King's Rendering, but in a manner so perfervid and so exalted that it lost touch with the true legitimacy, and became identical with the doctrine of the second advent. We have no statistics to show how he was received or what proportions were attained by the sect of which he was the head. One would think that it must have been, numerically at least, more important than might be inferred from its character, or from any available records, from the simple fact that it was worth while for a Pope to condemn it, as already mentioned, in the brief published by Gregory XVI. on November 8, 1843. This was possibly on account of the thaumaturgic phenomena and the priestly pretensions of Vintras, who, without any episcopal consecration, as need scarcely be said, took upon himself the ecclesiastical function and celebrated mysterious masses in which the hosts had miraculous properties and exhibited strange stigmas, while the sacramental wine was given up by the atmosphere itself, and was seen, in the presence of the worshippers, to distil by drops into the chalice. The church which dispenses the sacraments could not, of course, tolerate this Eucharist which flouted apostolical succession and yet offered such miraculous signs of efficacy. When Vintras was excommunicated, he did what other arch-heretics had done of old before him; he excommunicated the Pope in return, and, further, clothed himself with pontifical garments of a pattern received in his revelations. As a consequence probably of the papal brief, the sect appears to have been proscribed shortly afterwards in France, and the self-constituted pontiff betook himself to London, where his miraculous masses continued in the prosaic region of Marylebone Road. The house is still standing with its old walled garden in front, but it offers no external evidence that it is a house with such a past behind it, and probably its present occupants would be astonished to hear of all that once transpired beneath its roof. The sect, in spite of its miracles, and most probably because they were connected, in the good old Protestant days, with the 'superstitious mummery' of the mass, attracted little attention in England, but it was there that the second epoch in its literature began. There the prophet Vintras published a book which constitutes a further gospel of the sect, under the title of *Le Livre d'Or*, the preface of which is dated from the house above mentioned. It was followed by another fulminating work, the *Sword on Rome and Her Accomplices*, also issued from London, and announcing that Vintras was the Prophet Elias, the precursor of the second coming of Jesus Christ. We see, therefore, that the Saviours of Louis XVII., so far as they are represented by this prophet, had now completely passed into an advanced Messianism, and this was actually the keynote of some ultra-religious devotion in France at the period of Vintras. It received its fullest and most philosophic expression in the works of Hœne Wronski, who announced an absolute reform of human knowledge under this name. Naundorff is said to have been a disciple of Vintras, but there is not much evidence in support of the statement, and we have seen already that he had set up as a prophet on his own account. It was a period of political convulsion, and of considerable social distress; revelations also were transpiring everywhere, and the Pedlar of Rochester, Wayne County, U.S.A., had already begun his knockings. The only citable names in connection with Vintras are those of Madrolle, a Parisian littérateur, and Charvoz, a pious and learned priest, whose heads had been turned by the revelations and the marvels. Charvoz testified to the miracles at the cost of his curacy, but whether by resignation or expulsion is not known; and M. Madrolle gave evidence in pamphlets which have now passed out of memory. These pamphlets lead us to certain grave charges which were made against Vintras. He was accused of indulging, under the name of religion, in certain singular excesses, to which it was replied, with some show of reason, that such accusations are the unfailing resource of enemies in cases of this kind. But, on the other hand, if M. Madrolle may be taken as illustrating some social and ethical principles by which the sect abode, there is certainly a slight ground for the suspicion. At the present day the societies for the practice of Black Magic which are said to exist in France, and to have nameless rites, are often referred to Vintras, and the bizarre charge is indeed the last fatality which befell the unhappy Saviours of the Dauphin. For when Vintras died in obscurity, he can scarcely be said to have left any followers. The sect, so far as can be ascertained, had perished before himself. It is true that Louis Michel de Figanières arose subsequently to announce that all mysteries had passed away, because he himself had discovered the living science which explained all existence, from the Deity to man; and that he was, to some extent, the last voice of the legitimists, whose history reminds one of Bishop Berkeley's treatise on Tar-Water which, beginning with the merits of that preparation, went on to discuss all subjects beneath and above the starry heavens. I mean to say that perhaps there is no movement which in its various developments has so much forgotten its original intention. Though latest in time, Louis Michel has passed away like the prophets who preceded him, but, unlike these, he appears to have left behind him a small school in Paris which still obtains a hearing occasionally in those periodicals, more numerous there than here, which deal in hallucinations and enthusiasms. They do not mention the Dauphin or the lineal descendants of Naundorff, if these are still living. The wrongs of the Duc de Normandie, real or supposed, are now shadowy, like those of Jacques de Molay, and the few persons who connect with the Saviours of Louis XVII. are content with their philosophies of the universe, tinctured by certain schemes of social reorganisation. Speaking of the philosophies, there is not, perhaps, much choice between Naundorff and his heavenly doctrine, the lucubrations of Vintras, except that he is almost unreadable, and the doctrine of universal life, propounded by Louis Michel. Many misfortunes followed all these prophets, and among them Vintras, in addition to those which were occasioned by his enemies, seems to have been subject, more especially in his later life, to profound inward misery. The reports of gross immorality which have been charged against him are in all probability unfounded, and so also is that alleged connection with Black Magic to which I have before alluded. On the contrary, the closing years of his existence, and of his pseudo-pontificate, were, according to the vast documents which he has left behind him, made lurid by his fanatical mania against similar supposed practices. In these and other respects the few French people who have elected to take such a trafficker in philosophy as Hœne Wronski under their unconditional protection seem to have turned too savagely on Vintras. They have not accused him of imposture, because that charge is singularly difficult to handle in these circles, but they regard him as a false prophet, and they have not been specially concerned in keeping clear the line of demarcation between truth and invention in what has been spread abroad concerning him. Despite all this, and perhaps because of it all, the King's Saviours make, as I think will be apparent, one of the most curious and fantastic chapters in the political-religious proceedings of France in the nineteenth century, if only for the unprecedented way in which it merged a political object in a spurious transcendentalism, and this to such an extent that the royal pretender himself, dissatisfied simply to be encircled by seers and diviners, became a prophet on his own account. It is to be regretted that the sect has not been seriously studied in this or any of its aspects, and that after all is said and done we know so little of the rival Dauphins, their mutually exclusive gospels, their sham priesthoods, sacraments, and miracles.

Addendum.—I have omitted any full reference to the claim made on behalf of Eleazer Williams, a missionary to the North American Indians, as it has no literary interest and carries no consequences. It was made public in the first instance by his brother missionary, Hanson, who wrote some articles in *Putnam's Magazine*, and subsequently a book entitled *The Lost Prince*. This was about 1850. More recently, a kinswoman of Williams has given her version of the claim in *The Story of Louis XVII.*—perhaps, unavoidably, with a certain partisan accent, in respect more especially of the better-known pretenders.

THE PARADISE OF HERMES

ALL great books from the Bible to *Don Quixote* are, as the scriptural phrase goes, 'written within and without'; that is to say, they carry a meaning within them which does not always appear on their surface; and it frequently happens that books which are obviously designed as allegorical, for example, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, are in reality much less suggestive than those with an interior significance less consciously, or openly at least, designed by their writers. Comparatively few people will, however, be aware that there are large literatures still extant, the growth of a number of centuries, which depend wholly for their assumed importance on an inner meaning which differs from their outward sense, the latter in many cases being practically unintelligible by itself. One of these literatures is that which was concerned in the past with the transmutation of metals. The metamorphosis of radium redirected attention not so long ago to this old dream of alchemy, and it has been very properly pointed out by men of science, in reply to some inquirers, that the phenomenon in question does not give colour to those theories of transmutation which for many past generations enlisted the interest and commanded the convictions of notable persons all over Europe. Setting aside the question of the possibility, whether, that is to say, transmutation has been accomplished by any accident in the past or whether it will be discovered in the future, there is no more singular literature than that of alchemy, and it may well offer, even at the present day, some material for speculation to persons who, without any predisposition towards the so-called secret sciences, and believing most likely that no such sciences exist, are yet not wholly disassociated from an interest in old-world curiosities of book-writing.

The secret sciences were presumably perpetuated by reception, as their name implies, in other words, by transmission from one person and generation to another. They suppose, therefore, custodians, without which such transmission would be impossible. On the face of alchemical literature the claim of this custody is plainly written; possibly it is the only thing which is plain or demonstrable concerning it. It forms part of a very large body of evidence that certain knowledge—whether actual or fanciful does not here signify—was handed down from a somewhat remote past through the period of the Middle Ages. Such knowledge was sometimes concerned with matters of experiment connecting in one way or another with the domain of physics, as, for example, in the case of alchemy; at other times it transmitted old ideas of philosophy; and in yet other cases religious beliefs of antiquity have, under one or other guise, and in any case with many corruptions, been apparently handed down. So far as the West is concerned, the literature of alchemy is in the main a Latin literature, and it rose up in Europe about the tenth century of the present era.

It could scarcely be regarded as new, for it had, setting China aside, its Greek and Arabian antecedents, which take the technical subject back some hundreds of years; indeed, into proximity with the beginning of Christianity. But it assumed certain new characteristics when it put on a Latin garb, and we get into closer touch with its methods and have a better knowledge of those concerned in its production. From the tenth century to the end of the seventeenth, and even later, this literature was carried on without any interruption, using the same symbolic style, preferring the same claims, and being then, as it remains still, without any real meaning for the general world. No critical writers have ever taken hold of the gross fact of this literature and succeeded in explaining it on any principle of mere crass imposition, or forgery of the ordinary kind. They have seized upon it at certain periods, and have tried to show that the ignorance and credulity then prevailing created a demand for such books, and that the libraries supplied it then as they would do now if such a commodity were marketable. At the beginning of the seventeenth century there was some truth in this impeachment, and we may accept it sincerely as accounting for many so-called works of alchemy produced then and later. But it does not account for obscure Aramaic treatises which did not see print for centuries, which were put upon no market, and yet use the same symbolism and seem to repeat the same things. It does not account for the obscure alchemical poems containing the diaries of obscure and sometimes unknown workers which did not enter into daylight till they were brought forth by Ashmole, the antiquary. It does not account for four centuries of production, and more even than this, between the period of the Latin Geber and that of Caxton, when there was no printing and no ready method of circulating manuscripts so that profit could be ensured to their authors.

The same quality of criticism might point to the wider fact that alchemists, for obvious reasons, were often popular with princes, were honoured guests at their courts, and this also admittedly explains some fraudulent pretensions, yet such persons, well-known exceptions set apart, were not the alchemists who created the literature of metallic transmutation. Few literatures have been more independent of patronage. Most of the works in question were either anonymous or passed under names which were obviously not those of their real authors. Where some courtly connection existed it tended to produce the opposite effect to that which such criticism suggests. There is Arnold de Villa Nova, once a respected royal physician, who lost position, home, safety, and ultimately life itself, because of his devotion to a forbidden art. There is Raymond Lully, the so-called Jewish neophyte, not the *doctor illuminatus* of the *Ars Magna*, but that obscure and indeed concealed master about whom we know only on his own testimony what he suffered at the hands of royal avarice. Passing to later dates, there is here the gentleman from Scotland who was racked and imprisoned, suffering all martyrdom except its crown, because of the knowledge which he refused. Again, there is the English adept whose name has never transpired, who describes himself as a wanderer upon the face of the earth, set apart by his secret from all common familiarity with men, and ever occupied in eluding his enemies. Later still there is the so-called Greek Archimandrite who, as if possessed by some missionary fever, travelled from place to place, exhibiting a mysterious gift of which we know only that he gained nothing by it.

Let us take the palpable fact of this strange literature of the centuries, and suppose that the men who wrote these books were members of some secret fraternity, speaking a common language by which at any time and in any place they could communicate with one another: assuming this, the mere existence of the literature becomes comparatively intelligible. We can understand it, that is to say, in a vague and general manner—whether the transmutation of metals was actually the object in view, or whether this ostensible design covered a different purpose, as has been occasionally suggested. We may not know why the writers had recourse to such devices, whether from motives of propaganda—that there might be ever a witness in the outside world to attract from generation to generation those who might be fitted for the purpose—or for some less accountable reason. We may not know, even upon the last supposition, why the *Ordinal* of Thomas Norton should have remained, as it did, entombed for centuries, yet we do grasp a certain clue by which we can see why there was this continuity of purpose going on age in and age out, ever saying the same thing, yet ever saying it differently, and at the same time revealing nothing that was intelligible to the unversed mind.

When we add to the palpable fact what is known only to those who have penetrated beneath the surface in search of some meaning running through the immense cryptic literature, namely, that, however seemingly absurd in its purpose—or, shall we say, however quixotic?—it proceeds on methodical lines which connect it, symbolism interweaved with symbolism, with other similar literatures, dealing with other alleged sciences, we find ourselves confronted by what is at least a strange literary problem. If we admit, therefore, that it is quite possible, and is, in fact, more easy to account for a long-sustained cryptic literature by means of a secret initiation, we must admit what follows therefrom, namely, the existence of secret orders in the Western world, whereby the knowledge, real or illusive, was from time to time imparted. If we read the literature of alchemy we shall find that most of its professors affirm that the art is impossible without an instructor.

The literature of alchemy does not stand alone in its testimony to the existence of a perpetuated knowledge, but it is the most consistent, evident, and striking witness. There is much the same conclusion to be drawn from the proper study of old books, and especially of old manuscripts, on magic. During the narrow period of its existence, this must be also admitted of kabalism, and even astrology is not altogether silent. As to the strength and significance of the testimony there has been great misconception among the critics of all schools indifferently, and, of course, nothing follows from the fact of initiation except the existence of initiation. It is not an apology for the secret sciences to admit that they were studied in secret and so perpetuated to modern times; it simply relieves an existing department of human interest and inquiry from the charge of complete fatuity. In an ordinary subject it would not be needful to insist on such a point, but no person can approach these questions without being misconstrued.

If we elect to set apart the voice of the literature, we shall find history itself begin to speak, though, as with the books of the adepts, it is at best somewhat vaguely. Age after age, in the old ages of intolerance, before judge and inquisitor all over Europe, went on the great, merciless, intolerable persecution of wizard and sorcerer, and age after age the one patent fact which it did elicit for all that have eyes to see was that, whether within the body in corporate assembly or without the body—if we prefer to speak in language which approximates to that of the believer—in the collective hallucinations of dream and vision, or what not, assemblies were secretly held in the past by adepts and their pupils, equipped with the most elaborate devices of mask and pantomime. It can serve no purpose to challenge this in the name of criticism. It is wholly natural, and even inevitable, that persecuted people should unite in secret;

they have done it in all ages of the world. And if we say that these assemblies connected with others of an earlier date and kind, we shall not go beyond the bounds which have been defined, at least tentatively, and with no little show of research and reason, by independent investigators.

About the period of the Renaissance there seems to have been marked activity on the part of these secret fraternities, taken generally, and again about the period of the French Revolution. There is no need here to discuss in the second case the extent to which the adept became a political conspirator. The history of most esoteric association, for whatever purpose instituted, has from time to time exhibited this tendency, which has been mentioned already, the political connection becoming stronger and closer as we recede in time, till we reach the antique civilisations, in which the governing classes had the whole custody of science and faith, when the so-called adept was also priest and king.

Let me add here, and for the moment with that touch of independence and even detachment which usually suggests knowledge, that if there be, as there certainly is, some foundation for the indirect rumours which reach one from time to time, it will not unreasonably follow that secret association of this kind has continued to the present day, even in England. The fact, and it is a fact, does not of itself justify the existence of the secret sciences, nor perhaps the recrudescence of interest in such subjects which is a characteristic of to-day, but it certainly lends to their historical aspects an additional interest, which will increase as the student comes to see that the claim has another basis and the fact another aspect of importance. For that which, in this case, does follow from initiation besides the existence of initiation is the congruity of one symbolic process with the symbolisms of other processes working, some antecedently thereto and some coincidently therewith. In a word, if hypnotism and mesmerism are a certain gate opening into strange sanctuaries of knowledge, alchemy is a sacrament of their literature, for it divided, as we shall see later on, into two schools, for one of which the dream of material transmutation was entirely superseded by the higher quest of the soul and its conversion.

SOME OFFICES OF VAIN OBSERVANCE

NOT only are great subjects encircled, for the most part, by an external penumbra which, in comparison with themselves, is a region of trifles, but the actual subjects, when approached, not so much in an unserious spirit as in the mood of the light mind, seem, under such auspices, to abdicate their proper office and to manifest on their fantastic side. They enter to this extent the region of comedy, and as he must be a cross-grained poet who cannot be diverted by the skilful parody of his own work, so it is in no sense outside the law that the true mystic—who is saved by many things, including the sense of humour—should perhaps be the first to appreciate the motley appearance of his own interests, when seen under the reflections of travesty. From the days of Eugène Sue and his epical romances, and thenceforward to Zola, a long line of poets, prophets, and makers of revelations have formulated and expounded to us the greater mysteries of Paris, all of which have gone as far as might be possible to show that it is the one city now situated in Europe wherein a man of parts may take up his abode with every consideration for his dignity. Of the lesser mysteries, some, at least, may be supposed to reflect the same sentiment, or to intimate, if you prefer it, the same polite lesson. Their name, however, is legion, and it is in their midst only that it is possible for the man of parts to forget occasionally, and for a period, that he is almost of necessity a Frenchman. When he has forgotten this, it is open for him to become many things, but always to the exaltation of his honour, and it will be a matter of astonishment with many persons not actually its residents, who believe that they know their Paris, including the Quartier Latin, to learn shortly what ambitions and what aspirations, at this beginning of the twentieth century, are alive sincerely in the hearts of certain Parisians, and are recapitulated silently when, catching his reflection in the looking-glass, each of them says devoutly, though not always audibly, *adveniat regnum tuum!*

As there are few interests that are of consequence, I will take among the legion of these lesser mysteries a single class, which has at least the advantage of being curious and would deserve to rank as important if its varied claims might be assumed to admit of verification. The records of these mysteries exist in a literature which, beyond its particular groups, is very little known in Paris, and is not known at all outside it, with the possible exception of that which the Sar Péladan has dared to certify as possible to French genius when offering to the women of Paris his instructions on the best means of becoming a fairy—*comment on devient fée*—and to the men of that gay capital his grave, if unserious, treatise on the best means of becoming a magician—*comment on devient mage.* It follows that the lesser mysteries of which I am speaking here are otherwise occult mysteries, and here it is necessary to distinguish. That there is occultism in Paris, as in London or New York, must be known to most of the world, but as in London it signifies in the eyes of the vain multitude an interest in psychical research, and a desire to investigate the *poltergeist*; as in New York it connotes a regard for trance oratory and a tendency to accept mediumship for materialisations and the direct voice; so in Paris it means probably, for this same multitude, if it means anything definitely, a certain disposition towards the doctrines of Allan Kardec, for example, reincarnation as established by clairvoyance; a certain leaning towards theosophical notions modified by pantheism not inelegantly rendered into modern French and led in the direction of demonstrations by the less obtrusive phenomena of spiritualism. As to all of these, they are lesser mysteries of Paris, of London, or of New York, but specifically they are not those lesser mysteries to which reference is intended here. The latter are not, perhaps, fundamentally, more curious, and they are not, perhaps, less insincere, within the horizon of the vain multitude; but they are less obvious among the many things which rank as mysteries, and they are less conspicuously diluted, though they are also in modern French, and are not without the aids to reflection which are furnished by the *conversazione*, the *soirée*, the *séance tenue*, and the *compte rendu.* For the man of parts is deliberate after his own fashion, and that invariably, even when he has mentally exchanged the Frenchman of his period for the mystic citizen of an eternal kingdom, and has so, without exactly designing it, ceased from being republican and materialist.

It appears, from an analysis of the documents, that there is a choice of courses open to him, and that, among these, is the pursuit of alchemy, which just now is flourishing with great vigour in Paris, is not unknown at Lyons, and has been reported at Bordeaux. The interest in this pursuit is so vivid that a handbook has been prepared for its disciples, containing full instructions for becoming an alchemist—*Comment on devient Alchimiste.* M. F. Jolivet Castelot is the writer of this manual, and his predecessor in the same mystery appears to have been Albert Poisson, who is termed the Restorer of Alchemy. As this work descends even to the most minute particulars concerning the daily life of the alchemist, as it may be lived in Paris and the environs, even in the matter of the ablutions, it may be thought tolerably complete; yet it must err on the side of insufficiency as, for the further direction of the student in the same subject, some learned persons have founded the Alchemical Society of France, which is a section of the Faculty of the Hermetic Sciences, a body which dispenses degrees, titles, and the certificates which are evidences of each—*magnifiques diplômes* —and certain initiated authors have not been afraid to add the words *Docteur en Alchimie* after their name on a title-page. It is reported that the Alchemical Society has a regular course of study and a decisive laboratory practice; as regards the term of its labours, it would seem that 'gold has been furnished, but only in small quantities, differing in this respect from that which is produced by the philosophical stone,' because mere science can deal only with those *minima* of which *non curat lex magna* of the old adepts. In other words, Paracelsus and Raymond Lully are the masters still, while the man of parts, although he is a Frenchman and has learned how to become an alchemist, can reproduce their traditional achievements *en petite quantité seulement.* But, as M. Jolivet Castelot explains, he is for all that on the right road, on the road which leads to ecstasy, 'that privilege of the adept.' And for his further guidance there exists, and there has existed for some years past, a monthly review, entitled *L'Hyperchimie*, which, if it does not contain the proof positive of metallic transmutation as now performed in France, is undeniable evidence of the extent to which these lesser mysteries must be prosecuted in secret by persons well acquainted with the terms, experiments, and development of modern chemistry, for in other respects it must be classed as a highly technical periodical. Outside these centralised and perhaps vested interests there are traces also, or occasionally, of isolated and more mysterious researches which can scarcely be named here, but are at work in the same direction, and it is not so long since an American visitor to Paris was shown the 'menstrual water of alchemy,' the dissolvent of all metals, in the form of a limpid fluid having a slightly acid flavour. In such ways does one section of *La France spirituelle* qualify, beyond the doctorates of its Hermetic Faculties, for the mystic citizenship of the eternal kingdom already mentioned, and I may add that, in the mind of M. Jolivet Castelot, it seems impossible for a right-thinking alchemist to be other than monarchical in politics, while it is, further, a canon of perfection that he should adhere to the dynasty of Orléans.

The occult sciences are, in the minds of their disciples, all inter-connected; it is impossible to pursue one without becoming tinctured by another; and thus he who is, before all things, an alchemist, will, at least after a secondary manner, be familiar with the heads of that particular mystical tradition which, under the name of the Kabalah, has been cherished both in East and West for something like ten centuries upon the most moderate computation, and from time immemorial according to the opinion of its adepts. There is not much need at the moment to enter into an explanation concerning it in this place; but it is in part a philosophical system, and in part it is a magical art. It originated among the Jews at some undetermined period of the Christian dispensation, and it has a very large literature in Jewry. When it first attracted attention among Christian scholars in Europe, so many points of comparison seemed possible between its philosophical portion and the chief doctrines of Christianity, that it was regarded as an eirenicon between the two religions, and it was held that Christianity Kabalistically interpreted would ensure the conversion of all Israel. Though we still—or some of us—have our missions to the Jews, it would seem incredible at this day with what fever of enthusiasm this false light was followed by many learned and sincere persons who had no interests *per se* in any transcendental philosophy and still less in any occult or magical art. I must not say that no conversions took place as the consequence of all this zeal misplaced, but the value of the instrument was assuredly out of all proportion to the machinery which was required for its manufacture, and it fell into disuse accordingly. It was then that the Kabalah passed over among the Christian scholars of Europe to that use for which one phase of it was originally designed; it became part of the intellectual baggage of the occultist, to whom its externals belong properly, and outside this interest it ceased to concern any one. It entered into connection with alchemy, probably in the seventeenth century, and with other secret systems, including some of the Masonic rites, during the course of the eighteenth century; it fell asleep at the Napoleonic period, like all the connected interests, and, so far as France was concerned, it awoke in 1850, for the purely academical work of Adolphe Franck, published a few years previously, scarcely calls for consideration from this point of view. It has now become one of the leading interests of the lesser mysteries of Paris with which we are here concerned, and is regarded as one of the important depositaries of the hidden truths which have come down to us from antiquity, though its highest claims are missed rather than realised. M. Gérard Encausse, otherwise Dr. Papus, who is a great light of these by-ways, has done what he could to simplify it, and it is not at all necessary for the man of parts in Paris who is disposed towards such subjects to embarrass himself by the study of Aramaic, in which dialect the chief books of the Kabalah were originally written, for sufficient of their substance has been rendered into French, usually out of the Latin versions which appeared in the past, and it is never essential for this kind of scholarship to go actually to the root of the matter.

It must be confessed that the French Kabalist is, for the most part, a dull person of preternatural gravity, and the authors who cater for him do not know their subject. The alchemist of Paris is much to be preferred before him, even though he can make gold *en petite quantité seulement*, if actually at all; but his existence has made it possible to establish a Kabalistic Order of the Rose-Cross, admission into which, being obtained with considerable difficulty, is much prized in consequence. And this Order has done something to redeem the dulness, for it has elaborated a system of occult man-hunting, and has been for some years past very busy behind its guarded vestibules in tracing to their doom the Black Magicians of Paris whose evil practices are counteracted by the higher arts of the Kabalistic Order—a consideration which brings us to the last class of the lesser mysteries with which it will be worth while to deal here.

Though the alchemist in Paris may desire to make gold possessing a commercial value, he is, ostensibly at least, actuated by grander aims. He is in search of that mastery of Nature which gives gold to the Alchemist, a familiar spirit to the magicians, and the wisdom of the stellar influences to the searcher of the starry heavens. The pursuits of the Kabalist are of a still more lofty order, for he is learned in the emanations of the Deity, and in the virtues of those mysterious letters and numbers by which he believes that all things were made originally, whether in heaven or on earth. There may also be some ground for supposing that he is concerned after his own manner in the conversion of that Israel which the exponents of other mysteries, also located in Paris, would extirpate if possible by fire even and by sword. The ground is that the old books of the Latin-writing scholars who tormented themselves with this subject are being put into French, and after reading a recent version of the *Adumbratio Kabbalæ Christianæ*, first published in the seventeenth century, wherein a Kabalist and a Christian philosopher compare their respective tenets, one can imagine a man of parts and a Frenchman excusing his indifference as an evangelist only by a reasonable hesitation as to whether it would not serve as well if he personally became a Jew, Christianity, in this curious tract, having already converted itself into Kabalism, so that the Kabalist might turn Christian.

But the lesser mysteries which have produced all these high, if occasionally inarticulate, ambitions, have produced also the revival of Black Magic, in which flippant Paris, so far as it concerns itself with any, finds much more for its entertainment than in the Alchemical Society of France, though it has been patronised by M. Berthelot, or in the Kabalistic Order of the Rose-Cross, though it has been patronised, in the person of one of its chief spokesmen, by M. Adolphe Franck.

The Black Magician does evil for the sake of evil, according to the hypothesis which explains him, and in this he is unlike the Jesuit, by the terms of another hypothesis. The peculiar nature of his pursuits leads him to be more occult and mysterious than either Kabalist or Alchemist, though these also believe that there is wisdom in mystery. The latter, however, pursues it largely for its own sake—mystery for the sake of mystery—but the former of necessity. That which he dares to attempt must, for his own safety, remain hidden and obscure, since it is nothing less than a league with the powers of evil, as to which it is unnecessary to say that he is demonstrably hallucinated up to the point of nightmare. The reports concerning such practices have, however, passed into literature and even into history, and though originally their actual foundation may have been so thin as to be something more than elusive, they have acted in a country like France much as suggestion acts on a subject in the hypnotic state; in other words, they have created their object. As we hear of them now, they offer elements to our consideration which are certainly not to be found in the old legends of the Black Sabbath and in the old records of sorcery, which were a coarse and crass phantasmagoria produced upon a scale which befitted the nature of the participants. Their horrors were chiefly ridiculous—the peasant's dream exteriorised. But in these days the grace of literary skill has exercised itself upon the subject; the romantic writer has adorned it, as a Parisian, who is a man of parts, for the Parisians who are his brethren and are fitted to appreciate exotics. In this way a *cultus diabolicus*, a religion of the evil principle, has been invented, firstly on paper, and has been put subsequently into practice in those secret places where lesser mysteries of this kind can be celebrated. Into the motives which have prompted the frenzy on either side it is impossible here to enter, but the worship of Lucifer is based broadly on the presumption that he is not the Satan of Milton, but a tolerant combination of the Satyr and Silenus, under whose rule the Decalogue has been abolished. It is perhaps manifestly unfair towards the occult circles of Paris to include this kind of aberration among the number of their pursuits, but the pathological consequences which are supposed to result therefrom are of the kind which were said to follow the Black Magic of the past; what has been done is to civilise the process. Moreover, evocations, divinations, and all the hundred and one rites of White Magic also abound in the same city; secret and other societies exist to practise them, and they have, finally, their weekly journals as well as their monthly reviews. I must confess that all this sounds incredible enough, but it is true—and a very small parcel only of the whole truth. Materialism, the anti-clerical movement, and liberty as it is interpreted by the Republic, have produced more wonders than the great phenomena of faith; and the expatriated religious orders may well smile at all that which they have left in possession behind them. It is not entirely an idle task to have lifted for a moment one corner of the veil. It is open to any person when he finds himself on the spot to verify the report and to extend it. He could fill a volume easily, although he would be told at the beginning by those who do not know, that it is mere invention on the part of some perfidious Englishmen, or at most the gross exaggeration of sporadic and uncommon forms of mania.

Of such are the lesser mysteries of Paris. They do not appear on the surface, at least officiously, though they are not unknown in *salons*, and occasionally some episode of the moment gives them a moment's vogue. It remains to say that, with their connections and derivations innumerable, they all issued from or were revived by one epoch-making apostle of the occult sciences who began writing about the year 1850, using truly a pen of magic, under the name, already mentioned, of Éliphas Lévi. In spite of his pseudonym and of the fact that he was a Kabalist among other things, he was not a Jew, but actually a brilliant and unfortunate Abbé, who lost his clerical position and turned to the secret sciences, possibly in search of consolation, possibly as a part of his doom, or, in the opinion of the censorious, for more material reasons. The explanation matters nothing; *vous savez qu'il faut vivre*, and the important fact is that this personage, equally in England—where he is now well known—and in France, has created what is generically termed the occult movement. Without him, it would have been impossible to write on these lesser mysteries, for, to speak in the language of the occultist, they would only have existed negatively. Assuredly there are more things in Paris than are dreamed of in the philosophy of its visitors, whether from England or America, or further across the seas.

DWELLERS ON THE THRESHOLD

THE spontaneous phenomena of the double, with which psychical research has made all the world familiar, have a legendary history which is older than any written chronicles, far older than Akkadian tablets or the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*. If we may venture to define to ourselves for a moment that which is involved philosophically in this curious subject, and if we may begin by assuming what many serious persons at this day regard as experimental knowledge, safeguarded by all necessary precautions, we might say that the phenomena in question are the sign-post of a natural possibility, from which, as from a starting-point, investigators both old and new have proceeded on their path of research into the mysteries of the unseen. The results, if genuine, offer an express contradiction to some of the most favoured conclusions of official science which have been brought over to us from the later half of the nineteenth century. We do not hear so much at the present day concerning those inferences, which less than three decades ago had been almost elevated into principles and by which the limits of research were fixed. If this be the case, it is the consequence of psychic investigations. Already the dogmatic budget of the Belfast Address reads with an antiquated accent, and may one day recall the physics of Robert Fludd. No one now mentions that Law of Continuity which in the interests of ordered reason forbade all interference with the known sequences of what was understood by Nature. We have come also to see that it was in virtue of some unstated quality of faith that philosophers could once affirm a positive agnosticism. Ruysbroeck, Jacob Boehme, and Saint-Martin were forgotten for one moment when it was said that the noumenal world was beyond all experience of humanity.

But we again remember Ruysbroeck and the long line of mystics, and we know that the divine part of man is not excluded utterly by the phenomenal from all communication of the Infinite. Now, the history of that communication is occasionally the history of the phenomena of the soul manifesting on the external plane, and of the research after those phenomena by which the soul is supposed to manifest.

We are all of us aware that the natural religion of Paley has failed not less signally than the scientific non-religion of the agnostic. It was said on the threshold of the Christian centuries that 'the world by wisdom knew not God,' nor has it been advanced towards that knowledge by the 'teleology of the watch.' Nature, when she is taxed, does not respond to us with any testimony concerning an infinite benevolence. For her, the race is to the swift and the battle to the strong; but if fleetness and force are outwitted, it is because of superior cunning. There is no mercy in Nature; her law is *sauve qui peut*. She has assuredly her higher aspects, and from these we can gather consolation, encouragement, something of the illuminating message which we need to fill the soul and to satisfy its hunger; but Nature herself can offer us no warrant for distinguishing between her higher and her lower part, or for saying that the peace of a still sky shining over a still sea presents her more truly than does her law of 'plunder and prey.' And with a single great exception, not as yet disentangled, the alleged revelations do not help us, for they carry this self-same law of prey and plunder from the natural into the Divine order. These are common difficulties enough, and their recitation is by way of transcript; but if they lead us to a method of escape they are worth transcribing even for the thousandth time. We need a warrant for hearkening only to the higher ministry of Nature and for severing intellectual correspondence with her more coarse and sordid part; to eliminate from our horizon the brute in her, as in our search after a higher life, we must seek to expel it from ourselves.

Now, the central doctrine of Christianity has been taken to be that God is Love, and that He who is one with the Father appeared on earth to make known this divine fact of the universe in the face of all that shrieks against it in Nature.

Few have understood this fact from Dominic to Torquemada. Nevertheless, it was the one message which the world needed and still cries for; it had no demonstration then and it has none now.

But if psychic science, apart from all other and indeed all higher evidences, can and does offer a demonstration of the existence of the soul and of its survival after death, man is at once placed in connection with another order of being than that with which he is at the present time environed, and it is possible to take an entirely different view of the mixed and disconcerting lessons of the natural world. We are at once neither the beast nor its product; we belong to eternity. Another light than that which reveals their misery falls on gutter and rookery, and it does not signify any longer, or at least to such a degree, that there is plunder and prey in the woodland. All these things are transitory, and their lesser mysteries may be left to unravel themselves, if need be, in the light of that order to which we do not belong less truly because it is not as yet manifest. This is the rude and general consequence of the first real and indubitable psychic demonstration which falls within the first-hand experience of an ordered reason. It is neither science, philosophy, nor religion, but it may become the warrant of all. Its first philosophical consequence is that the noumenal world is within us, and from that consequence we may proceed to interpret to ourselves the nature and meaning of our present place in the phenomenal. We shall make in this way an initial step towards the only truly natural religion, which is sacramental and regards the visible universe, with Emerson, as an omen and a sign, or, with Saint-Martin, as a great parable which, sooner or later, will give place to a grand morality.

The research which has led us to the recognition of this natural religion will reveal to us also the deeper and higher order which is beyond it—being that which is signified by the omen and the morality behind the parable. It will lead us also to the respectful acknowledgment of a great and abiding mission within the official churches, because these are also sacramental. They may have their imperfections and their futilities; they may often mistake the type for the thing typified, and may offer the gross sense in place of the true spirit; they would scarcely be official churches if they did not something of all these things. They may also have many shameful pages in their history, but they are still true churches, or assemblies of the faithful under the light and leading which comes from beyond the present sacramental dispensations; in other words, they are palmary channels of grace.

But above and beyond these general considerations, there are others which are more important because they are more vital, and they are more vital because they are particular to each of us who can receive them into the life of his mind. From the facts of psychical research to the acknowledgment of the noumenal world, from the recognition of that world to the consciousness that it is abiding within us, and from that consciousness we may pass to the realisation of the great truth that all real knowledge is within us, and that outside all ministries of Nature, and all communications of grace through official institutions and churches, it is possible for the light and wisdom of the greater world to enter directly into our souls.

It is in this sense that outward things must finally be held insufficient, even as ethics are insufficient, but their office in both cases is like that of Virgil in the Divine Comedy; they are wardens in places of the darkness and they leave us only at the heights.

But the fact that there are higher warrants for the convictions here mentioned, with greater and more signal justifications for the life which should follow therefrom, does not derogate from the importance attaching to the lower ranges of evidence. Through them indeed is the pathway for most minds, and so only that the soul enters, it does not very much signify by what means it passes into the Houses of Peace.

The manifestation of the powers of the soul being, as already put forward, under any circumstances important, it seems in continuing the consideration advisable at this stage to say that more important still is the manifestation of its graces; and here is another distinction between the things which are called occult, with all their derivatives and collaterals, and the things of the mystic life. If it may be doubted that the code of ethics has ever led man to his proper term—

which is scarcely the office of ethics—it is more doubtful still whether the phenomena of the soul have done anything but awaken within people already predisposed a sense of their place in the universe. That such things are, however, the coincidents of the spiritual life at its earlier stages cannot be denied, and here is their value, on the understanding that the dwellers at the threshold should not be mistaken for the threshold itself and much less for the wardens of the life within.

WHO STAND AT THE DOOR AND KNOCK

THERE are certain subjects which, although they may involve questions that in themselves are interesting, important, and even vital, have suffered so gravely by their associations, by some regrettable characteristics in their history, or by the contempt which they have excited in thinkers, that it is almost impossible to name them in any serious connection without incurring a reflection of the displeasure under which they have themselves fallen. There are certain literary personalities and certain atmospheres in literature which are sufficiently considerable for an instructed critic to be perfectly well aware that they cannot be lightly set aside, but he knows also that their discussion must be rigidly excluded from the literary reviews. There are certain details in history which must be avoided, even by the specialist; the purely intellectual and sometimes simply evidential subjects which are tabooed in all circles of an authoritative kind would fill too considerable a list for enumeration at the moment; but one of them is comprised in the question whether occurrences of the kind which it is customary to term supernatural do or do not occur, frequently or occasionally, in the manifestations of modern spiritualism. I mention the alternative expressly because the debate from the negative standpoint might be regarded as scarcely less intolerable than its opposite. The inquiry has been ruled out of the regions of serious thought, and words are wanting to the presidents of folk-lore societies and other assemblies when some necessity of the moment involves a reference to persons who have been led to examine it, whatever the result of their studies. It is not worth while to survey, even lightly, the natural history of the prejudice which has prompted men of science and their substitutes to assume this position; we know that from all time thinking people have been disposed to extend their jurisdiction over things which are beyond their knowledge on the ground of their observations in fields which are within that knowledge. They are frequently actuated by a certain rightness of instinct within a certain limit, though they err not less frequently over much that is vital in the main issue. In the case of modern spiritualism they are justified by the sorry intellectual atmosphere in which it has lived and moved and had its being practically from its birth, leaving out for the moment the commercial fraudulence with which it has transacted its business from the time that it became a movement possessing a financial aspect. But Professor Tyndall once described spiritualism as intellectual cyprianism—using a stronger word—and in admitting this definition there are other eminent professors who miss the real point, namely, that it may be accepted consistently—setting aside the offence of an analogy which rests for its warrant rather on ill-will than on any tolerable correspondence—without denying that, amongst the many dubious manifestations which make up modern spiritualism, there are some which, in the last resource, are not the simple products of common fraud.

It will be seen that in opening a study with this accent, I can hold no brief for the defence of the subject, or it might well pray to be delivered from a too candid apologist. My experiences therein—to make use of a conventional term—have, however, convinced me—so far as evidence can be held to convince any one—that there are genuine phenomena—to make use of another convention—in the moral ragfair of spiritualistic manifestations. In making this statement I am not seeking to enlist the convictions of any one, for other experiences in very different regions have sufficiently instructed me not only that convictions are made or remade by anything rather than evidence in the majority of human minds, but that what is understood as evidence brings often an insufficient appeal to the rational faculty. I am seeking only to clear the issues, with which object, if any one asked me whether I have seen intelligent writing produced between locked slates under circumstances which fairly exclude the suggestion of trickery, I should reply that I have; and if he questioned me further, whether in dark séances, when the so-called medium has been held in my arms, I have witnessed the levitation of inert objects, I should again reply that I have. I do not attach to these occurrences the explanation of the believer, and they do not interest me *per se*; as a Frenchman might say: *il n'y a pas des choses si embêtantes que ces choses là*; if I were less indifferent to the facts, I also might see some reason for denying them. As it is, I place them at the disposal of the persons whom they may concern. They are at least useful as indications that there may be other forces in the universe than those which have been described so far in the great encyclopædias. There is assuredly a psychological point of view from which, if genuine, they cannot be otherwise than important, yet this importance has been exaggerated, or, to put it perhaps more correctly, it has been, like other points of the subject, very gravely misconstrued. There are, broadly speaking, two theories based on an acceptation of the facts after ninety per cent. of the alleged phenomena have been removed from the consideration. One of these has determined that certain organisations of mankind can, owing to some psychological or psycho-physiological peculiarity, become the mediums of communication between man and the worlds of unseen intelligence, usually that world which the same theory peoples with disembodied human spirits. The alternative explanation sets aside the idea that there is any operation of intelligence outside that of the person designated as the medium, and concludes that the phenomena which take place in his presence are the product of his own psychic nature externalised, so to speak. Between these theories it is not necessary to exercise a decided choice in the present instance; the evidence is so inconclusive that any selection would merely indicate a particular mental predilection. There is another school of thought, at present very little known in the world, to which the phenomena that serve as a groundwork for both these views have been familiar for many generations and by which they are regarded under a totally different aspect. This school, which, broadly speaking, holds that the universe can only be understood subjectively, would shrink from investigating the Subject by an attempt to externalise it, because it is not in the outward manifestation of its powers that, from this standpoint, it is possible to study the soul. The mere statement of the standpoint shows that there are other warrants, but even with this school, interesting and old as it is, we have no special concern here. It is impossible within the limits of a short study to give expression to the issue, as it is also impossible in a few words to measure the value of any other explanation, or to state an adequate reason for denying the phenomena *en masse*, or for accepting some proportion among them.

There has been so far, however, no serious attempt to take into consideration the intellectual condition of the period which saw the inception of modern spiritualism and the circumstances under which it became, within a short time, an almost world-wide movement. It is in this way, notwithstanding, rather than in any other, that it may be possible to account for it both philosophically and historically. Whether rooted in actuality or in delusion, it must have ministered to some need of the age, and herein is the first secret of its existence. An historical excursion of this kind should be committed to neither view, but having regard to the fact that the element of delusion has been on any hypothesis extensive throughout its whole career, a dispassionate spirit will not be renounced by saying that this was in the nature of the case inevitable. Phenomena of the psychic order are not to be judged from what is termed the normal standpoint. No man of science thinks of proclaiming the discovery of a new star or a new element either from the love of deception, or with a view to personal profit, or as a result of careless observation, because it is possible to verify the accuracy of his announcement; that is to say, in things physical the same set of circumstances will always secure the same effect, although it must be admitted that there are processes of chemical research which are so delicate in their nature that it is not invariably possible to reproduce the same results under conditions which appear to be the same. It is quite otherwise in the region of psychology; we are here dealing with the phenomena of life; we find that we are not able always to reproduce the circumstances which resulted in certain phenomena with such accuracy that we can be sure of realising the same effect, and this creates naturally a doubt as to the original result. It is, moreover, not, at least in most cases, a result that remains, and this opens the door to every variety of deception, conscious on the part of those who are impostors, unconscious on the part of those who are hallucinated.

The inevitable consequence has been that psychic facts are always less or more under suspicion, to which we must add a further warrant for reasonable scepticism from another standpoint, namely, that such manifestations most abound among those impressionable natures which are least capable of observing, recording, or distinguishing between them. They require, therefore, to be approached in a spirit which is, unfortunately, still rare; that of the enthusiast is fatal to inquiry, for he is prone to deceive himself and to be misled by others; that of the hostile critic commonly paralyses inquiry; that of an ordered reason, alive at once to the besetting difficulties of the research and to the importance, within limits, of its ends, is alone the desirable spirit. To it should be surrendered the task of distinguishing the good and evil, the truth or the delusion, which belong to this remarkable movement of the nineteenth century.

The genesis of modern spiritualism takes us in the first place to America, and our initial experiment must be the visualisation of the mental conditions which obtained in the New World at the period of its birth.

Let us remember in the first place that the old Pilgrim Fathers and the first colonists who followed them carried into that New World a certain occult baggage, and it was of a kind not readily abandoned by a new enthusiasm which persecution had driven forth in search of liberty. Moreover, every persecuted enthusiasm has within it the elements of the oppressor. In the philosophy of history the nonconformist and nonjuring fortitude of the Pilgrims had the New England tragedies as its most likely, if not necessary, outcome. The occult baggage which has been mentioned was probably contained within the covers of any copy of the Holy Scriptures which went with the Pilgrims into exile. At that period there were few persons who, believing with all their heart that the Bible was the Word of God, could yet dare to disbelieve in witchcraft. As a matter of fact, it was believed in so conscientiously that persecutions of wizards and witches in the New World became such a serious menace that interference in the last resource took place from England, and thus the substituted fires of the transatlantic Smithfield were ultimately extinguished. They had been preceded, as we must also remember, by what may be termed a new Tyburn, and the people who went thither, not in the days of Queen Elizabeth, but in those of John Endicott, the Governor of Boston, were Quakers. It was not so fierce a frenzy, but it was more iniquitous in its way, for, by the hypothesis of the case, witch and wizard were a public danger, but no hypothesis could present the peaceful Society of Friends in this light. It was not so fierce a frenzy, and it was not so long. Subsequently, in both respects, the occult baggage of the New World was put to other uses, and thus we find the phenomena of the revival as a precursor of the phenomena of spiritualism. Among its prototypes in Europe are the religious extravagances of the Jansenists, of Saint Médard, and the followers of Paris the Deacon. The history of all paroxysms and of all crises offers analogous phenomena. Those which characterised the revivals amply illustrate the fact that the precursors of American spiritualism had very strange types of frenzy. The doctrines preached at their meetings were as coarse as the raw material of a Salvation Army conversion, and the preachers were of a similar order. It is not necessary to suppose that they were in any marked degree, or actually in any case, the consequence of direct imposture; the universal mania which they produced is fair evidence of their sincerity; such madness is usually begotten of madness. The records of the meetings exhibit an enormous variety of experiences, for the most part violently physical, and common to both sexes, as to all grades and ages. Some of the pathological conditions thus induced have undoubtedly considerable interest from the standpoint of pathology. They were phenomena of nervous excitement which ended incessantly in syncope; scores and even hundreds of persons at a single meeting being left as if dead upon the ground. Phenomena which at other periods would have been called trance mediumship, the gift of tongues and so forth, were also common.

Many strange elements must have no doubt contributed their various powers—hypnotic suggestion as between operator and subject, assisted by the auto-suggestion of impressionable persons who came to the gatherings with a presupposed crisis already fermenting within them.

Another index of the mental condition of the country is afforded by the rise of the Shaker community, which a large class of spiritualists has agreed to regard as intimately connected with their own movement. The vulgar instinct which has led to this recognition is indubitably correct, and Shakerism is simply a variety of revivalism having, as such, the same prototypes in the past. There is something interesting and even pathetic about this otherwise despised sect and its consanguinity with the Eastern dervish veiled under the scornful baptism of its name. The scattered communities, full of pastoral simplicity, were, perhaps, the gentlest and least obtrusive of all religious congregations, the same qualities characterising its slender literature, including its semi-inspired writings. The simple ceremonial rite of Shakerism, which appears like a village festival to the ordinary observer, has curious connections with the past. The dance of these amiable enthusiasts and the incipient ecstasies which accompanied it indicate some obscure but ineradicable tendency in human nature towards the symbolism of movement. The founder of Shakerism, if it can be said to have had a founder, devised, quite unconsciously, a rite which belongs to the earliest form of Nature-worship, and to the most elaborate ceremonies of the great religions. The mystic circumambulations of Priests of Osiris and Isis, Runic marches of Druids, and mad gallops of Bacchantes and Coryphantes, madder war-dances of Arizonas, processions of the Catholic Church and the Buddhist Lamasaries are all independent of one another, and yet all are alike in the recognition of a natural instinct of enthusiasm which finds vent in conventional motions.

The most approximate and real precursor of modern spiritualism was, however, mesmerism, for it was that which produced the trance mediumship which has been thought the most salient characteristic of spiritualism, the most prolific form if we admit that it was ever genuine, and the most facile in its simulation. There are no records of the first introduction of mesmerism into the Western world. It was there at an early period of the nineteenth century, and we hear much about it in connection with Benjamin Franklin. Few important contributions to the art or science were made therein, and it was, moreover, one which was much exploited in the objectionable sense of the term. In addition to being in hands which were unwise, when no harsher judgment deserves to be pronounced upon them, the subject had the narrow standpoint of sectarian public thought to contend with, and those only who have a first-hand knowledge of the religious life of, let us say, New England, can adequately realise what is included in this reference. That which is true of public thought in New England is true also of many other states, and especially Connecticut. It was, in fact, the consequence of the religious feelings of the Pilgrim Fathers, which is sufficient to say that it was clean, honourable, and in its way wholesome, as it was also sturdy, but it was restricted, rigid, and pharisaical; it kept indiscriminate enthusiasms within bounds, but because it had no enthusiasms it had also no life, and it soured easily and early. We have to realise this religious quality of America in order to understand those movements which were revulsions against it and recurred to the opposite extreme. The Lord's Day in New England is the key to the phenomena of the revival, and the respectability of Connecticut made mesmerism of necessity disreputable, and that not by imputation, but in a literal and exact manner.

About the year 1835 a circle of private inquirers undertook to study on their own account the phenomena of mesmerism, and they had the good fortune to secure the services of a singularly sensitive subject in the person of an illiterate ploughboy, named Andrew Jackson Davis, whose alleged seership was destined to become a connecting-link between the epoch of animal magnetism and that of modern spiritualism. While in the trance state he began, as it is claimed, to enter the spiritual world and to receive communications therefrom which he delivered to the circle, and in a very short space of time there was produced in this manner a large work known as *The Principles of Nature*. For those who find it difficult to accept the explanation which it gives of itself, this book is a curious intellectual puzzle; if it is not, as it claims, a voice coming to mankind from a plane outside this world, it seems equally certain that it could not have been the voice of a ploughboy. He may have possessed an understanding which was beyond his station; the deficiencies of his schooling may have been exaggerated; he may afterwards have written polemical theses out of his own head and offered them as the result of his mediumship, but the boy Davis, as we meet with him first, was like Jacob Boehme, the poor shoemaker of Gorlitz, seemingly incapable of doing that which must alternatively have been done through him. It does not follow that this book, so extraordinary by the claims that were made for it, is miraculous by the nature of its revelations. There are thoughtful and cultured persons at the present day who are neither blind believers in spiritualism nor susceptible of easy ministry in spiritual things, nor convinced out of hand by a shallow show of philosophy, who may be said to have taken this book into their heart of hearts and to have found it satisfying. They are not to be represented as a standard for the formation of a conclusion concerning it, but it is right and necessary that their view should receive consideration, while it is reasonable to infer that the work which could produce this impression on no mere idle readers must have something of the true matter. Having said this much out of the common sense of justice, it is necessary on higher considerations to add that it contains nothing of the kind. It has, of course, the merits and defects of such originality as it possesses; it has also the faults of its place and period; it stands in much the same relation to the deep wisdom of being that Martin's picture of the Plains of Heaven stands to all that which it has not entered into the heart of man to conceive. Its nearest analogy is the thin universalism with which we are all familiar; it is Theodore Parker ratified by the guarantees of the world of spirits. At the same time, it is full of that kind of suggestion which finds a popular response. The most important point concerning it is, however, that, independently for us of all question as to its origin, but certainly for those who accepted it mainly on account of its origin, it became in modern spiritualism a kind of authoritative explanation of the universe. In other words, spiritualism owes the peculiar complexion of its philosophy to this and to the later books of Andrew Jackson Davis. There is no need to say that, in the last resource, it is shallow and even vulgar; it is sentimental rather than spiritual; it is, at most, a kind of Hans Andersen in Heaven.

It should be observed, therefore, that prior to the outbreak of the particular manifestations which are understood by spiritualism, there was already a mental tendency among the American people to accept communications, supposed to be derived from unseen sources, by which the orthodox views of the other world and of human destiny therein were very seriously revised. Perhaps in some respects this tendency was the first beginning of a revolt against rigid Puritanism and the final reprobation for the majority of the world which has always been inseparable therefrom. Outside the religious aspect of the question, we have to take into consideration the mental calibre of the period, its limited outlook, its peculiar sense of fitness and of good repute, its commercialism and the quality of Sabbath Day pietism working side by side with the commercialism; and lastly, those tendencies inherited from the first settlers which made the witchcraft trials and the Quaker persecutions possible in New England.

As regards the manifestations themselves, the form which they first assumed and the results to which they led up, there is no need to recapitulate at any length so familiar a story. The raw materials of modern spiritualism were a departed tinker, a house of strange knockings, a family of illiterate witnesses, and one inventive person who devised a mode of communication. The tinker produced a greater effect than might have been possible for any angel at the place and in the period. The knockings arose in the house of a farmer of Hydesville, Rochester, N.J., and they were heard first by the children. As already said, the family was wholly uncultured, though not perhaps ill-educated in comparison with others of similar position in the same place at the same time. As regards religious persuasion, they were Methodists, and we may picture them as in all probability an exact replica of Miss Wilkins' realistic groups—pious, strict, respectable, and with a high character for probity, having two kinds of cake on Sunday and a disposition towards brown gowns and russet hoods. The knockings became noticeable with some suddenness, and they were not confined to a particular room or passage; they were liable to become audible anywhere in the building, from the roof-joists to the cellars, but it was observed, when observation began, that they appeared to follow the children. They were distinct, incessant, and somewhat indiscriminate sounds of varying force, but it was some time before the presence of invisible hands began to be suspected. The Fox family of Hydesville could not be presumed to be acquainted with the archaic history of mysterious knockings. As it was clearly not the death-watch, on account of its volume, as it was not the creaking of stairs, the intramural descent of plaster, the splitting of knots and boards, or the cracking of old laths, it began to be suspected that the disturbance was produced by somebody, and it seems at last to have entered into the heads of these good people that the children were doing it. But the children were questioned and watched, and, what with watching and questioning, it became apparent that they had no hand therein. Then it was that the notion of haunting began at length to inspire the family, and there was much quaking in consequence. The report of the rappings spread beyond the original circle of their manifestation, attracting much attention and even awe in the little township, so that the farmer's homestead became the focus of an uncomfortable interest, not unmixed with some suspicion of interference on the part of the Powers of Darkness, while there were recollections, still more uncomfortable, of the before-mentioned New England witchcraft and the fate of Giles Corey of the Salem farms. When a sort of rough committee of investigation began to sit on the Hydesville phenomena a Quaker was permitted to intermeddle with its deliberations, and he figures in the story of the knockings as a person of uncommon shrewdness who betrayed more good sense than any one. As, in spite of the committee, the rappings continued, exhibiting more volume when they passed into more prominent notice, and as there did appear to be a volition present, it occurred to the genius of the Quaker to try and learn what it meant, what it wanted, why it was there, in other words, as the conventional phrase now goes, to establish communication therewith. His device was a species of telegraphy; it was probable that the unseen intelligence had once at least been acquainted with the alphabet, and it was, therefore, invited to reduce the knockings to a system and, with the committee's assistance, to spell out its discourse to the company. The proposal seems to have been accepted, and a familiar intercourse begun. In this way it came about that we owe all modern spiritualism to the ingenuity of a Quaker, a fact which every historian has recorded, and no one has noticed. Most hauntings wear themselves away by fruitless reiteration, and, apart from the Quaker, it may be determined that the Rochester knockings would have died out in time for the mere want of some one to understand what they signified. The code which he arranged soon laid all doubts at rest, and the history of the haunting, with its purpose, was unfolded without more trouble than might be expected to reside in common difficulties of orthography. That was an old house in which the Fox family resided, and there was one terrible episode in its history with which the present tenants were said to be unacquainted. A pedlar had been murdered there many years back and his remains buried in the cellar. His spirit was restless for two reasons: he desired the guilt of his destroyers to be proclaimed, though it could not be brought home to them in the body because they had also passed out of the body; and he wanted decent burial. It was, in fact, the common legend of the ghost, and it is here again to be observed that the only circumstance which set it apart for ever from the catalogue of local wonders resided not in the ghost or its history, but in that at last a denizen of the body had contrived a method for dealing intelligently and easily with an alleged denizen of another world. It was this, and not the story, not the bare fact itself, which noised the Hydesville knockings all over the American Continent. When the murder-history came to be verified—as it seems to have been in due course—it was not that the credentials of a mere ghost were established. It was the fact that this ghost of all others was the only one that had been taught how to spell; it was the means of communication which had been verified. It is unnecessary to say that from this moment forward no one thought of the Quaker, and there is nothing to show that he regarded himself as having achieved something which had never been done previously in the known history of the world. From that time he disappears entirely from the scene. At no anniversary and at no congress, national or international, which has met to commemorate the wonders that he originated by 'three for yes, two for no, and one for doubtful, and please rap clearly on the right letter when I call over the alphabet,' has any person dreamed of naming him. For the reason indicated, the Hydesville knockings were not a nine days' wonder. Through the length and breadth of the land the news flew by the wireless telegraphy of enthusiasm. The code of communication with the invisible world had been discovered, tested, and found efficacious; and before the year was out the phenomena had been duplicated spontaneously in a hundred places by a thousand and ten thousand persons. There is no possibility here of following its development through the production of those so-called 'higher phenomena' which at the present day are familiar, at least by repute, to almost every person in the world.

It would, no doubt, be true to say that there is possibly no period of modern times which would not have been electrified for the moment by this news of the invisible world, which showed very speedily how entirely that world differed from the theological conceptions then current regarding it. To discover, as people very speedily believed that they had in fact discovered, how life for man on the other side of the screen of material things was specifically neither better nor worse than our own, and how in any case it was so entirely human, with all the folly that resides in humanity, could scarcely fail even now to produce an impression, much as it did in the first half of the nineteenth century. One cannot help thinking, however, that this period offered some facilities which were not confined to the place where spiritualism originated. If we take England and France, the two countries which next to America have been most open to this reputed gospel, we shall find a good deal in both to suggest that no time could well be more favourable for the promulgation of such a message. The period in question was, as it were, a halfway house or stage between the universal disillusion which followed the French Revolution and this modern world of ours which, for a moment or a few generations, has since sought to take into its heart the gospel according to science.

It may be serviceable to visualise for a moment the condition, more particularly of England, on the eve of the introduction of spiritualism. It was the period between the epoch of Shelley and that of Tennyson, and its chief poet has been accepted to be Thomas Hood, in whom the tenderness of interest in all things human, without any tincture of religion, was developed very strongly. In prose fiction the greatest name was Dickens, to whom the same description applies so exactly that the one name almost suggests the other, and yet the correspondence in this respect between them, so far as I am aware, has not been noticed by criticism. Both were devoid of any consciousness of the supernatural, and this was, perhaps, the keynote of their period, despite all the rancour of Protestantism, and despite also the Tractarian Movement and the approaching restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. If, from these considerations, we turn to the state of what is called transcendentalism in England at the period of the Rochester knockings, we shall find that it is represented solely by a small school of animal magnetism.

England, in a word, was wanting in living faith; it was a period of spiritual coldness and torpor; when men were profoundly dissatisfied with that which was offered them for religion, and too inert to seek out something more sustaining unless it was brought to their doors. When at these doors the voice of the Rochester knockings did sound, proclaiming that the dead live; that there is nothing inscrutable or fearful about their mode of living; that they come among us and are ‘nearer than hands or feet’; and that all this is not a matter of faith, but of fact, which every person can verify, is it wonderful that the sick hearts stirred in the weary bodies; that souls stirred in their sleep and thought that the day was at hand? Is it not rather wonderful that such a message produced no greater effect than the sudden conversion of a few thousands scattered over the country?

As regards France, we are not too well acquainted even now with its folk-lore and with that which so often and intimately connects with folk-lore, namely, stories of the haunted and the haunters. There is not a literature of verified spirit-histories, so far as we know, in that country, as there is here in England. The ancestral ghost, the family which is pursued generation after generation by supernatural terrors, may not be less plentiful there than here, though we have fewer means of ascertaining. But that France welcomed the manifestations more keenly even than our own country is clear from the history of the subject. The French mind had been prepared for the alleged revelation by innumerable preliminary insights into the unseen world obtained by subjects in the ecstatic trances of mesmerism. In other words, the way was paved for the revelation in that country as it was so eminently in America, and here to a lesser degree. There are in the early volumes of a periodical founded by Baron du Potet many communications prior to 1848 which offer astonishing points of contact with the results of trance-mediumship in America, but, from the first years of its traceable existence, spiritualism in France took an altogether independent line, and this independence has continued up to the present time, the alleged messages and revelations being intimately connected with the theory that the human spirit always reincarnates in other bodies, and thus returns to this world.

It is sufficient to state the doctrine to indicate one at least of the peculiarities which characterised the French speculative temper. Reincarnation can scarcely be regarded as a transcendental doctrine at all; it is not an explanation of the divine dealings with humanity; it is not a key to the great mystery of good and evil; but it is something of a simple substitute for all of these, and as such it has done immense service to that section of restless French minds which is, and has been, dissatisfied with orthodox religious doctrine, nor less, indeed, with the scientific materialism which rules out all religious doctrine. It is to be questioned whether spiritualism would have been so successful in France if Allan Kardec had not thoughtfully married it to the theory of the metempsychosis. There are, of course, minor schools of French spiritualistic thought and investigation outside that which is associated with the doctrine mentioned above, and among these the earliest in point of time was, perhaps, that of the unlettered Alphonse Cahagnet, who, by his influence on the movement, recalls Davis in America, though he was not himself a seer. He made use of seers and seeresses as the intermediaries of communication with the unseen, and united magnetic processes with those of the spiritualistic séance. In the course of a very few years he collected a vast amount of information concerning, as it was alleged, the life of humanity beyond the grave. Its reliability is another question; his tests, it would seem, were confined to ensuring that his subjects were indubitably in an entranced state. He had probably never heard of Braid or the theory of suggestion, and there is little doubt that he received an abundant ministry in accordance with his own mode of thought and in unconscious response to the direction of his leading questions. The interesting point, however, is, after taking his revelations at their worth, to compare them with the Davis revelations and to mark, already in the early stages of the subject, how great was the analogy even amidst difference between the *Secrets of the Future Life Unveiled* and *Nature's Divine Revelations.* Both, perhaps, owe something to the direct influence of Swedenborg, though Swedenborg was not an universalist, and the possibility of progressive improvement in the next world had never entered within his horizon of vision.

As regards Germany, the only remaining country in which the movement can be said to have existed; if we pay attention to the intellectual condition of the various states prior to the year 1848, we shall find that the way had also been prepared, much after the same manner, by the researches of Reichenbach, with whose alleged discovery of a new force the American marvels seemed to coincide directly. The sensitives of this investigator perceived, as we have seen previously, the emanations which were alleged to influence subjects in the magnetic trance, though they were observed in connection with inorganic as well as organic objects. When it was affirmed further that they could be discerned in the neighbourhood of graves, the ghost of ordinary legends seemed on the point of specific demonstration. The facts observed by Reichenbach may not have justified his inferences, but outside purely scientific circles these inferences were widely accepted, both in Austria and Germany. At the same time, the Rochester knockings awakened little responsive echo in the Fatherland. The materialism of the German's mind and the heaviness of his metaphysics have become almost proverbial, and they will naturally be regarded as responsible in the present instance. Possibly the explanation is to be sought in the opposite direction. The proverbial accusation is only half true, and, indeed, it is strange that it should be preferred against the land of Tieck and Novalis. As a fact, at the inception of spiritualism, a species of transcendental philosophy was more or less paramount in Germany.

Not so many years previously Fichte had published his suggestive lectures on *The Way to the Blessed Life*, and had described the nature of the inward man as only partially included in normal consciousness. And almost at the very moment a lesser name had created for itself a transient, but still significant celebrity, that of Lorenz Oken, who, being a distinguished naturalist to whom his science is indebted for some stages of its progress, became a species of mystic in his *Elements of Physico-Philosophy*, inventing a strange numerical transcendentalism by which to explain the universe. The fact that a work of this kind, whatever its imperfections and extravagances, lived and prospered for a time, and was even translated into English in 1847, under the auspices of the Ray Society, will sufficiently indicate that there were minds at the period in Germany, as elsewhere, which were fully disposed towards the transcendental, and if spiritualism failed to establish itself therein, it was rather because of its vulgar and conventional wonder-dealing than because of prevailing materialism or cultured indifference. There, as here, the materialists were not open to the reception of facts which could be simulated so easily, and were hence explicable so simply by the hypothesis of imposture. And there more than here the transcendentalists had less need of a gospel according to ghosts, for of all that spiritualism could then tell them they were convinced already on that which they could regard as higher warrant; they did not stand in need of any one to rise from the dead, and were not disposed to take seriously the spirit-messages of a murdered pedlar. Of course, at the inception, the spiritualistic phenomena could scarcely be said to be accompanied by any philosophy of the subject; what there was belonged to the obvious order of ideas and inferences, and was that of the exceedingly plain man. It was connected early, as we have seen, with the magnetic revelations of Andrew Jackson Davis, but in a land which had numberless philosophies of the universe evolved by the ordinary process of excogitation, the *Principles of Nature* could not strike the mind as justifying the claim of its origin by any distinct advance in knowledge or fundamental superiority in thought, and, even on their own hypothesis, the new messages were of little consequence.

We see, therefore, that in respect of all the countries in which spiritualism has obtained anything of a substantial foothold it had been led up to by the phenomena of mesmerism. The believer in animal magnetism became a spiritualist much more easily and logically than some of the disciples of the Tractarian Movement drifted in the end into the haven of the Roman Church. The age also needed more than any official Church in that age could offer it. It was naked, cold, and desolating in the things of faith; it had a mean and hideous philosophy jockeyed here by the Scottish speculative spirit; it had everything to learn in science and to unlearn in manners, morals, and literary tastes. That for a moment it believed in ghosts, the Rochester knockings, the return of departed spirits, and the sentimental trivialities of the Summer Land shows that it was not incapable of salvation, and also how fully it needed it; it shows, further, that although spiritualism, in respect of its environments and of its motive, may belong to the low-life deeps of thought, once mentioned already, it was not without its purpose, since it helped to get the people away from the unlovely period which preceded 1850. While, therefore, not denying such occurrences as are well established among its phenomena, we shall not exaggerate their importance, and while in this way reducing its pretensions to their proper and reasonable proportions, we shall, in view of the spirit of the period during which they arose, get to understand why those pretensions were accepted in so large a measure, and why, with the changed spirit of the present day, the whole claim has passed largely into abeyance, since in things that concern the soul very different fields of investigation are beginning to be opened up.

A MASQUE OF ANARCHY

THERE was a time, as we know, when people were accustomed to speak of the dark ages, of their ignorance, their pretensions, the madness of their crowds, and the concealers of the light who governed them. There is no need to say that this point of view has passed utterly into abeyance! It is somewhat commonplace to mention it. The stones which were then cast have been recovered as best might be, and have been since directed more successfully against the egregious persons who used to decry these ages. We prefer now the period of Duns Scotus, Erigena Johannes, Raymond Lully, and the scholastic philosophers to that of the nineteenth century, up to and including 1850—those dull and pretentious decades which could not see that there were giants on earth in the elder days, and which thought honestly that Lord Macaulay was exceedingly enlightened and tolerant. It was during this period, as we have found, that the great masque of anarchy known as modern spiritualism began to be played in America; that it was anarchic, much after the manner of the revivals which preceded it, no historical student can well question, but that it was a masque in which real characters disguised themselves is also true. It was not the *Tableaux Morts* of lay figures or the pictured forms of lantern slides, and, at the same time, it was in no sense anything that it seemed or was supposed. It was played so long and so powerfully, and simultaneously in so many places, that the houses of scorn fell, and it is now possible to say, with a very full realisation of all problems connected with the subject, that it has opened up depths, even if it has not revealed heights, the unveiling of which has already transformed, and is destined by all that follows therefrom still further to alter the intellectual conception of the universe. Having given a short account of that particular environment which, firstly, in America, and, secondly, in certain countries of Europe, made the development of the belief in spiritism a possibility at the moment, the subject seems worth while pursuing somewhat further in respect of its later ramifications, and it is only necessary to premise that, as previously, it is not approached in the attitude of one who has any regard therefor from what is somewhat unintelligently termed the believer's point of view. Modern spiritism is important on no ground that would be acceptable by those inclined to endorse the explanation which it gives of itself; in the last resource it can scarcely be called important at all upon its own account, but there are certain matters connected with and arising therefrom; certain possibilities indicated by the evidence which exists for its claims; and it is these which, in my conception, have, so to speak, delimited the horizon of mankind. My purpose is, therefore, firstly to recite the plain tale of the movement, apart from philosophical considerations, and then deduce those inferences which an independent mind, versed in the other aspect of things called transcendental, would be disposed to recognise therein.

When the marvel of the knockings at Hydesville, already recounted, had spread by report through the chief cities of America, scepticism as to the actuality of the alleged communications was roused very easily and naturally when it was found that not every person who sought to make use of the code invented by the obscure Quaker of Rochester was able to do so with success. The raps would not come for all; ceilings and floors were silent; and it was in this way that it came to be discovered or claimed that certain organisations were requisite for the production of the phenomena.

We find here two points of uncertainty, first as to when the persons so organised came to be called by the somewhat illiterate name of mediums; and when, in the second place, it was found more conducive towards success to sit in circles round some such article of furniture as a table, on which abnormal sounds could be produced. However this may be, circles were formed to pursue investigation, which was in most cases to get the raps somehow, and as the research had admittedly its ludicrous side for the average intelligence, there is no need to add that the question as to the possibility of imposture being at the root of the matter was very speedily illustrated by practical evidence on the point. Most of the early circles have no history; they were evanescent, and left nothing behind them except sporadic convictions on one or the other side; but we have accounts of a few earnest sections of research which pursued their object with varying results. It is not possible at the present day to regard the operations as conducted in a scientific spirit or as preventing the possibility of fraud. We are not, as a fact, in a position to reach any specific conclusion about them, for the reports of the proceedings are meagre, though they would seem to have been based on the general assumption that effective precautions were taken.

One point in the manifestations may be noted here. Into the field of the ordinary rappings came firstly the tilting of tables, as more easily produced, which was true also in a sense that was not intended; and secondly came phenomena which recall the experiences at certain stages of the mesmeric trance. Persons, that is, not regarded as mediums of the more usual kind, became cataleptic, and in this state were believed to be taken hold of and controlled by an intelligence from the other world, thus producing what is now so familiar under the name of trance-mediumship. Prior to the Quaker's advent and the Rochester knockings there had been already one of these mediums in the person of Andrew Jackson Davis, and in a short time there were hundreds. The phenomena which were the consequence of the code differed generically from any previous attempt to communicate with the world of spirits. Many analogies have been instituted between modern spiritualism and ancient magic, but they are the product of inexact thinking. It may be affirmed that, so far as the West is concerned, namely, Europe and America, the study of the transcendental phenomena which followed the Hydesville knockings broke away entirely from all the traditional experiments of the past. In the first place, the old magic is based entirely upon conventions. There is the convention of efficacy resident in sacred names; there is the convention of virtue attaching to certain ceremonies and to certain prescribed rites; there is the convention that the recitation of such names, and the practice of such rites, can and does exercise a species of compulsion; there is the convention that the operator could and also did exercise this power. We are not concerned at the moment with discussing whether these conventions had any basis in fact, and hence we need not dwell upon the severe strain which they placed on all reason and likelihood. We are now only illustrating a distinction. The phenomena developed by modern spiritualism do not depend upon the operation of these hazardous possibilities, and the experiments are produced in the absence of any convention. When communication between the two worlds seems capable of institution, the attempt is made in the most natural of all manners, that way, in a word, which would be adopted by two ordinary human beings when separated by stone walls.

But it may be objected that this, after all, is only a different method. As a fact, however, the object was not the same. Speaking generally, magic did not attempt to communicate with the spirits of departed men and women. It is true that there was a branch of it which did, but it was an abhorrent and detested branch, belonging exclusively to the domain of black magic. In this connection it seems pertinent to observe that the idea of reunion with the departed appears to be a modern craving, of which we find scarcely a trace in mediæval literature; and there is no need to add that the New Testament does not betray any consciousness that such a desire existed in the human heart. There was a very strong and prevailing opinion that the dead were at rest, and the attempt to disturb that rest was a monstrous profanation. Hence it was only the worst type of sorcerer who ever practised necromancy, for the white necromancy of which we read in modern books is only a pleasing fiction. If there be any historical truth in the now world-wide story of Éliphas Lévi's evocation of Apollonius, his act must be taken in connection with what he said at a later period, namely, that necromancy was the blackest of the sciences of the abyss. Mediæval magic was the art of invoking the so-called angels and demons, spirits of the stars, the zodiac, the houses of heaven, the cardinal points, the elements, and so forth. In a word, it claimed to deal with submundane and supermundane intelligences, but it was above all occupied with those alleged elementaries which have become so familiar at the present day through the many incorrect and foolish things which have been advanced concerning them. We therefore see that, besides the distinction of method, there was a diversity of object, and that there is no real likeness at all between old ceremonial magic and modern spiritualism. It is important that this should be recognised, because there has been a recrudescence of the conventional experiments during recent years. The antecedents of spiritualism are not in the oratory of the magus, but in the spontaneous apparitions of humanity which have occurred in all ages, and are now beginning to be accepted, in the somnambulism of certain schools, as the natural genesis of the belief in the world unseen. There is elsewhere a tendency on this account to regard spiritualism as older than history, and also as the earliest religion.

Spiritualism, however, is not the fact of apparitions, ghosts, hauntings, and the return of the dead; it is the establishment of intelligent communication between man and the spirit world. If there be anything which characterises the spontaneous apparitions of the past, it is the terror and dread which such unearthly visitants inspired. The desire of communicating with them is, like that of reunion, essentially modern, though it is not, of course, the consequence of spiritualism. Again, a belief in the existence of an unseen world is not religion, though such a world is necessarily assumed by religion, nor is the communication therewith essentially a religious communication, so that we are dealing with a double misconception when we hear that spiritualism is not only a derivative from antiquity but the first religion of humanity. These are also important points to bear in mind, because the manifestations ultimately produced a philosophy, and even a species of religion; they will enable us to see how inaccurate is the reasoning which has governed the estimate of both these subjects. They will not be less useful in appreciating the value of the conventional occult explanation of spiritualistic phenomena, which has always viewed them from the standpoint of the magician evoking non-human spirits and has been unable to realise the intervention of disembodied human beings in the same section of transcendental phenomena. It has been ruled times out of number that the spirits which manifest at séances are not and cannot be those of dead men and women. It is true that the tension of this position has been somewhat relaxed of late by the admission of exceptions where necessary, but the reason of the ruling has not been given. It is the natural result of the limitations of a special position, and it recalls that of the Catholic Church, which recognises only diabolical interference in such matters. The advantage, however, is on the side of the great orthodoxy, which does afford a reason, and one, moreover, which is intelligible and satisfying if we consent to its standpoint.

The fact that spirits of another world had rapped and knocked, that the *poltergeist* had thrown, the banshee wailed, that houses had become uninhabitable through hauntings for years and centuries innumerable, and that all this time the simplest and easiest of methods by which ghosts could have been brought to explain themselves had never entered into the thought of man, was so overwhelming, that, outside the mere circles of curiosity after the last new wonder, there were many earnest men and women who were startled out of their normal course, were led to investigate the alleged occurrences and attempt to make use of the code, with such results, both positive and negative, as begot speedily a remarkable variety of opinion. Deep down in the heart of every human being there is the hunger after the supernatural, which is quite independent of grief for the loss of the departed, and of any desire for reunion. We are drawn towards the unknown as the earth draws us when we are poised on a dizzy height, despite ourselves. We may exaggerate the importance of the attraction, and we may misunderstand its meaning; it may not be altogether true, as it has been often supposed, that it offers proof of itself that we are made for the eternal as our bodies are made for the earth, or that the soul's resting-place is in the bosom of the great mystery as that of the body is in the grave. Along with the mystic attraction there is not only a sense of insufficiency, with a complete incapacity for realisation, which may be the true secret of such a sense, but a dismay not less deep and a disinclination equally strong. Here perhaps may be the seat of human scepticism as to the unseen, for the hunger of the heart and the attraction of the mind are not enough to make many of us believe in the reality of their common object. There is no need to speak of the ordinary forms of incredulity, the disbelief of the mere brute who has neither the higher sense nor the higher reason, and to whom the supernatural can mean nothing. It is to be noted, indeed, that the new gospel, as it came to be very soon called, convinced many persons of this order because of its appeal to the grosser instincts. If a ghost could haunt the earth, it was reasonable to suppose that it might make knockings and translate its desires by means of a counterpart of the dumb alphabet; and of course the intellectual difficulties did not exist for this class. They had not sufficient realisation of the simple incapacity to realise, but they could assimilate a palpable fact, and they could reach a conception of the other life which showed that the filthy was filthy still, the material no less gross, and which filled the seven spheres and the starry heavens with noise, grossness, and vulgarity, which all could comprehend. Those, on the other hand, who appreciated the intellectual difficulty, despite the hunger and the fascination, were little satisfied with this new gospel, because it neither filled nor satisfied. They had no part in the desire to perpetuate the inanities and the crassness. Between both these classes, or locate it where we may, there was a third order, not wholly slaves of thought or slaves of sense, those who could be ministered to by such books as described the easiest way of making the best of both worlds, who did not yearn consciously for the 'glory of orator, glory of warrior, glory of song,' but rather for that of 'going on and still to be'; and there were the people who shrank merely from the strangeness of the other life, like Charles Lamb. To both of these the new gospel came as a great relief. By the one, facts were wanted, and snatched at gladly, which would go to prove that life was not brought up sharply and abruptly to its complete finish at the grave's mouth. By the other, the kind of life which seemed to be demonstrated by spiritualism was the most blessed prospect ever given to save an unfortunate race from the terror of an excessive greatness thrust upon them. What, in fact, could be more natural, more pleasant, more desirable than this unostentatious promotion from the taproom to the bar-parlour, with a further suggestion beyond of a smooth sward and a bowling-green?

We might enumerate many more grades and shades of sentiment, but after all they are roughly divisible into two great sections—those who were prepared for conversion and those who were unprepared; in these, again, we may distinguish those who were over-ready, and consequently uncritical, and those who might be eager but could not palter with evidence; those whom hostility made incapable of conviction and those who were convinced in spite of themselves. In the conflict of writing, lecturing, talking which now followed, all sections were represented, and the hubbub was great correspondingly. Among the notable conversions to which the cause, as it is termed, still points with pride, may be mentioned those of Robert Dale Owen, Judge Edmonds, and Dr. Dexter. Among these we may select Edmonds as, on the whole, the most impressive in its history. Owen was an accomplished man, and in his way a graceful writer; there are many fascinating pages in his autobiography which offer testimony to his earnestness, but his contribution to the literature of the subject is too much of the *Night-Side of Nature* order—in a word, insufficiently discriminating. Dexter, on the other hand, is important chiefly by his connection with Edmonds, and requires no special mention apart from him, who remains, therefore, the central figure of the earliest epoch. He is this, not because it can be urged that he was a man of trained legal mind, accustomed through a long life to the sifting and balancing of evidence and counter evidence, but because, being of keen acumen and of known probity, enjoying universal respect, he entered into the investigation as a sceptic and came out not merely convinced of the reality of the phenomena, but himself a medium for their production. The memorial of his experience still reads freshly and has lost none of its impressiveness, for it is at once circumstantial and characterised by features which seem to preclude self-deception.

Very early in the movement we begin to find ourselves in the presence of a new literature, a term which is, of course, to be understood in the non-literary sense, for spiritualism has never yet produced a single writer in whom we can recognise the true matter of the great work of art, or even a tolerable substitute. In this it is like its own communicating intelligences, who have never yet given us a memorable utterance. We recognise occasionally the echo of many voices that we thought were still, but of a new voice there is no sign. We find ourselves also a little later in the presence of what may be termed historic circles. When it was proved that a medium for communication was indispensable to the work of research, and that not every one who tried could enter into communion with the departed, all those who showed themselves possessed of the gift were sought out in proportion to their power, to be tested with the rough tests of the moment, to be sat with, and to become more or less the objects of a kind of religious regard and devotion. The daughters of the Hydesville farmer were, of course, most of all in request, and were carried from house to house for the purpose of exhibition, much after the manner of other human wonders. We find also the phenomena developing with marked rapidity, not by their simple repetition but by the growth of new, for as the media multiplied, the diversity of the gifts increased. It has been noted already, that something akin to the trance of animal magnetism soon manifested its presence at séances, the difference between it and its outward prototype in the school of Mesmer being that it was either simply induced by the suggestion of the surroundings, or, alternately—and this became the accepted explanation, countenanced by the supposed intelligences themselves—that the subject was put to sleep by unseen operators. When the medium was in this state the power was noticeably increased, and we may observe in these earlier stages of research the beginning of psychography in automatic writing, and the gift of tongues, that is to say, neither the power of speaking upon subjects *ex hypothesi* unknown to or beyond the capacity of the medium in his normal state—of which Davis is the readiest instance—nor unintelligible utterances which might be mere gibberish but were regarded as a mystery language, and referred to the apostolic endowment—of which the best illustration is offered by the Irvingite manifestations—but the ability to discourse familiarly in some mundane language with which the entranced person was not really acquainted. There were, further, the levitations of objects sometimes of great weight and sometimes the medium himself, together with the apparition of strange phosphorescent lights. Clairvoyance—one of the higher phenomena of mesmerism—became also of frequent occurrence, and with it was connected clairaudience, or the hearing of voices which were non-existent rather than inaudible for the rest of the sitters.

The spirit in which these circles were held differed then as it does at the present day. With those who regarded Hydesville as the hoax of the century, the pursuit was a pastime and jest. With those who desired only to verify or explode the alleged facts, it was approached soberly enough, but in nothing higher than the supposed scientific spirit. With others, and it is not necessary to say that they were the largest proportion, it was a matter of religion, as they understood it; what they sought was reunion with the blessed dead whom they had long supposed to be at rest in God, and although they manifested as much activity as most of the humanity about them and showed no contact with Divinity, it was impossible for the section to divest themselves altogether of the preconceived notion.

While dwelling on this subject, it is necessary to say something of the religious purport of spiritualism at the period. It is a mistake to suppose that the eschatology which we connect with the new gospel was the production of that gospel. It was already in the world and had been given thereto in the person of Andrew Jackson Davis, whose trance communications established that man on going out of this life and entering into the next, is there morally and spiritually what he was here, neither suddenly worse nor better; that his state after death is not predetermined eternally by his acts or his faiths now; but that he does reap the consequences of his life in the flesh, with full opportunities, however, to improve and to progress. Eternal progression is the keynote of the divine revelations of Nature, as unfolded through Davis. When spiritualism began at Hydesville it had no such doctrine. The murdered pedlar did not manifest to the Fox family either to demonstrate the continuity of life or to confess the ecclesiastical doctrines of eternal reward and punishment, of a natural state of depravity, imputed righteousness or salvation through Christ alone. He came to publish his murder and to obtain the interment of his remains, that is to say, for the reason which had prompted countless hauntings from the beginning of ghostly history. The eschatology of A. J. Davis became the doctrine of spiritualism because spiritualism fell largely into the hands of the recipients of the prior Davis gospel, and it fell into their hands because it was the circle most suited to receive it in block. Had the same events happened in a Catholic country, the same or another ghost would have been troubled, or suffering, for the want of the last rites of the Church; it would have desired not simple interment according to order and decency, but in consecrated ground, and it would have needed masses for its repose. Did a circle at the present day composed of persons aspiring exclusively to the Beatific Vision sit for communications perseveringly, they would no doubt, by the hypothesis, I mean, attract spirits who would testify that they were in fruition thereof; and a circle of seekers in quest of the Holy Grail might receive its communication sensibly, though the validity of the sacrament would be open to grave doubt.

The opinions here expressed are not adventurous; it is only in exceptional cases that the communicating spirits of a circle contradict the received opinions of that circle in matters of religion. After every allowance has been made for opposition to sporadic and casual opinions, there is always an accurate reflection, like with like, firstly, of the generic status of the circle, in things mental, moral, and religious; and secondly, of those who have been drawn to them, whatever, in the last resource, they may be held to be. Many conversions to the Catholic Church have taken place owing to spirit messages received at sittings when the majority of those present belonged already to that faith. So also the doctrine of the Atonement is denied only when the circle itself denies it; the reincarnationist is assured of reincarnation, though it is unknown to the intelligence who ministers to a circle which has not received the doctrine. We may elect to account for these facts on a variety of grounds apart from those which deny the actuality of the communications. We may regard each circle as attracting or prompting intelligence of like minds, but this is to assume that in the next world there is the same intellectual confusion on all vital subjects as that which prevails here. We may say that the channel of communication, that is to say, the medium, in some cases changes and distorts the message, but this contradicts the essential notion of trance-mediumship. We may admit a slight tincture and partial misconception, but if the intelligence controlling the medium asserts the doctrine of the atonement while the lips of the medium deny it, there is then no spirit control. Or we may think that the intelligence has no message, no mission, but comes because he is drawn, either automatically or by his desire to mix once more with mortals, and says whatever is suggested, reflecting merely the mind of the circle; but the difficulty about this view is that all alleged spirits on all non-speculative matters do show a certain mind of their own. They show also knowledge of mundane matters unknown, possibly, to most or to all present. They can give tests of identity, and in rare cases it is found that they have foretold coming events; but of that world in which they live and move and have their being, they cannot say anything definitely consistent or reliable, and they have no deeper grasp, much less any adequate solution, of any problems which they might be expected to be able to solve. It has been suggested that they are in a state akin to somnambulism when they come to a séance, just as the medium himself is in a somnambulistic condition when he seeks to communicate with them. But it might also be proposed that they are normally subjective and in trance, and that they are awake merely for a few moments when they come into contact with humanity. The fact remains that, explain it as we can and may, it is impossible to construct a theory of the other life out of spirit messages, and that, therefore, spiritualism has at most demonstrated the existence of unseen intelligence. It has told us nothing of its modes and conditions, or rather, it has told us too much for us to be able to accept anything. Hence, also, it has not delivered that doctrine of absolute knowledge which alone could be regarded as abrogating the sacramental dispensation to humanity. It has, if anything, intensified the necessity of the sacraments by showing that even if dead men return to testify to their prolonged existence, they continue to speak in the universal symbolism.

But whatever the defects of its philosophical side, the testimony of the new gospel was at first fairly consistent; the minds of the investigators were something of a *tabula* *rasa*, and they were perfectly content to learn that relations and friends were still living and were not suffering the torments of the damned. It was a bourgeois gospel, and it came chiefly among bourgeois people who had no deep questions to ask and were easily satisfied with slight and partial explanations, as with tests which just left a reasonable ground for deception. The eternal commonplace of the messages did not occur to them; they would not have understood them had they been pitched in a loftier key, as they would not have appreciated spirit drawings had these been works of high art. The charm of the whole adventure was that it was so homely; even a child could understand it; not even a child could be frightened at this rendering of the heights and the depths of the infinite; very often a child present at the circle was the medium from whom the power was drawn. It was so unlike the old stories of hauntings and their horrors, the chain-clanking ghosts, the spectres of bleeding nuns, the dismal cries of banshees outside old castle windows, the decapitated apparition carrying the burden of a ghastly head under a shadowy arm. The dog was no longer afraid of it, the cat dozed on the hearth while the spirit rapped on the table. And through all there was the immense sense of relief and of pleasant revulsion from the narrow bonds of the old creed. It was not that people consciously abandoned it, but that somehow it had lost its grip. The Church, on the other hand, to speak generically of the episcopacies, conventicles, and meeting-houses which represented denominational religion, eyed the new phenomena suspiciously from the inception, and was not slow to perceive the intervention of the devil in its history; thus, that which a sympathetic side of opinion began to defend under the title of a new force was already known to it by repute under an older name.

Meanwhile, the general interest began to display itself by conferences and by the establishment of orders and associations. The conferences were for the practical, and, even at the present moment, the records of some of them possess historical interest. The associations were partly to give a little needful countenance to a subject which, in spite of the interest that it had evolved, was by no means free from the charge of folly, or the sneers of the contemptuous; and they were partly, perhaps largely, to facilitate investigations, or, more correctly, the intercourse between the dead and the living. The orders, and they were fortunately few, were either the dreams of Utopians or the devices of impostors, and therefore the explicit object in either case was something of an exalted pretension, the realisation of heaven on earth, the practice of the counsels of perfection, the restoration of schools of prophecy, and so forth. Some of them were short-lived, some fell into desuetude, and many into difficulties. They could scarcely be said to affect the movement itself, for they never really belonged to it. But one custom there was which crept into it at a very early stage, it may be said almost unavoidably, and this was certainly a source of corruption. It was the commercial element—in other words, the payment of mediums. The gifts of the spirit, as they were termed, became very early marketable commodities, and they were trafficked in for all that they were worth to their owners or to the industries which developed them. The puritanical father of the New World might loathe, as we shall see, the mediumship of his son or daughter—say, still of twelve years old; he might even and did ill-treat them on account of it; but he was not proof against the opportunity of turning it into a source of profit. The example was set by the Fox family, and there is no need to add that it was speedily followed everywhere. It was defended then as it is defended now on considerations which it is difficult to repulse, for time is money and man must live by his gifts if demand for their exercise prevents him from living otherwise. The answer was more difficult then than it should be at the present day when spiritualists are numbered by millions; when the professional medium should and could be at least licensed so as to render impossible the abuse and simulation by a mere rogue of those powers which he claims to possess. It led at once then, as it still leads, to the introduction of the impostor, and it was not long before the movement began to reap the inevitable results in numerous disillusionising exposures.

Spiritualism may be broadly divided into two main periods—that which preceded the development of the putative higher manifestations, represented by the full materialisation of 'spirit forms,' and that which is characterised by this presumably advanced phenomenon. The first may be said to end with the mediumship of D. D. Home, the second with that of William Eglinton. We are now, in England at least, passing through a period of quiescence; there are no mediums and no phenomena to speak of, while accounts which reach us from America, where mediumship is almost entirely a business vocation, pursued for the most part under circumstances where no real tests can be applied, are very justly estimated at their proper value. The second epoch began soon after 1873.

It is to be observed that while spiritualism has penetrated indisputably into most countries of the world, and counts its adherents everywhere, to use a colloquial expression, it has colonised only three—America, England, and France. In the country first named it supports thousands of mediums, lecturers, and religious preachers; it has thriving newspapers, and large and permanent institutions. There is no great town which has not a public company of some kind connected therewith. In England, on the other hand, though there are no doubt numerous believers, it is represented chiefly by one organ, the subscription-list of which is, perhaps, scarcely sufficient for the working expenses, while for anything outside a newspaper, as, for example, a magazine or review, there is little chance of subsistence, the attempt having been made over and over again, but resulting always in failure. In France the number of believers is probably much smaller, but the vital interest is large, and several competent periodicals have been in existence for a long time without any fund for their sustentation. It must, I think, be concluded that the movement has never had much real life in this country; what is true of the present day was true of earlier years when the phenomena were in full course. Another inference is that the body of spiritualists here is neither an intellectual nor a reading class. An examination of the lists of societies, which at first sight look very strong and representative of all parts of the kingdom, proves that it is confined chiefly to the poorer classes.

I have dealt already with the condition of things in

England at the time when the first reports of American spiritualism and its wonders began to cross the Atlantic. Politically and socially it was a troubled time, and that at home as well as abroad. The *coup d'état* was actually establishing the second empire; the Indian mutiny was at our door; the Pope was about to restore the Catholic hierarchy; it was the year of the great cholera; it was the period of the Chartist agitation, and the nonconformists were struggling earnestly for their liberties and rights too long denied them. It was not by any means a moment which seemed opportune for revelations from the other world; there was too much trouble by too many paths for much heed to be paid to the possibility of ghosts knocking in the wainscotting. For some time the reports created only a faint incredulity, like other tales of wonder coming from far away. England was, however, the one place in which events had been recorded much after the manner of the Rochester knockings—not, I mean, as regards the phenomena, which had been common everywhere, but as regards similar attempts to effect communication on the part of the living in response to a corresponding desire on the part of those who, being dead, were yet not sleeping. In the seventeenth century Glanvill, the Platonist, investigated personally and reported on certain hauntings in the house of a Wiltshire magistrate, wherein the disturbed spirit had done all within its power to establish intelligent communication, knocking at request and as often as requested, stopping at any number called by raps, and failing to go further only through the failure of the inquirers. Early in the eighteenth century, at Epworth Rectory, in Lincolnshire, the house of John Wesley's father, another ghostly visitant produced its raps any given number of times, imitated signs, knocking once for 'Yes' and twice for 'No,' and was evidently prepared to do more, but there was again a hindrance in the perseverance of his hearers. We have records also of a throwing ghost, or *poltergeist*, in a farm at Sandford, near Tiverton, which would indicate by knocks the number of coins placed on a table, and could respond to questions when the affirmative or negative were only wanted. These are three instances of remarkable sharpness for their periods in dealing with a case of haunting. On most other occasions no attempt was made to get the spirit to talk, and, perhaps, this frustration of intention will account for much violence and unruly behaviour on the part of the so-called disembodied natures, for, in spite of their efforts, they failed signally to get into touch with their brothers in the flesh. The conventional magician of England had, it is true, a necromantic method by which he was supposed to compel the spirits of the dead, not only to appear, but to speak, and those who care may read in old manuscripts, in Barrett's *Magus*, and in Sibley's *Illustration of the Occult Sciences*, something of the nameless practices which were resorted to for this purpose. There are ill-formed occult writers of the present day who would persuade us that the old magician had rites and processes of far greater efficacy and certainty than the simple methods of spiritualism. As they contrast them with spiritualism, it is fair to infer that they are speaking of processes by which the dead were called up. Any student who seeks to do so, has the means of acquainting himself with these, as well as with the meagre results which they obtained, and can compare them with what we know of the modern manifestations. Such rites are no more mysteries of occult science than spiritualism is really a movement set on foot by lodges of adepts to test the spirit and temper of the times.

The occult sciences in England have been always exotic, the one robust belief being of old in witchcraft, which belongs more to folk-lore and rural tradition. But in spite of penal laws, in spite of King James I., Joseph Glanvill, Henry More, Webster, and other writers, there was not such fanaticism on the subject as we find at certain periods on the Continent. The ghost was, of course, a source of lively interest wherever he appeared, and the lore of ghosts is scarcely less plentiful in England than in any other country in Europe. There are no better instances than the case of the drummer of Tedworth, and although it involves an apology for some early commonsense which is not generally admitted, perhaps the Cock Lane ghost deserves to rank next in the catalogue. When the report of the Rochester knockings came over there were unfortunately no spontaneous manifestations available on which the new method could be tried, but table-turning became a fashionable pursuit in a dilettante manner, though it never spread as it did across the Atlantic. In due course, however, it required an explanation at the hands of official science, and was referred accordingly by Faraday to unconscious muscular action, for the ordinary tilts and movements; to the cracking of joints, for the rappings; and to a suggestive pause upon the required or likely letter, for the messages received. Regarded as a gospel, it must be confessed that spiritualism has been sufficiently ill-starred, but it has found one compensation in the fact that its scientific explanations have been even more unfortunate. After the hypothesis of Faraday came the phenomena of the Davenport Brothers, who, whether conjurors or not, and for scientific purposes it was all conjuring or self-conjuring, immediately introduced new elements. Those wonderful cabinets, those ropes tied so dexterously and sealed so carefully, those floating instruments, those partial materialisations, whatever they were, were not the result of unconscious muscular action or the cracking of joints. Where science failed, the professional conjuror, apparently in the zeal for his own prerogative, himself sometimes stepped in to explain; it might be his business, and it proved his fortune; it was overlooked under the influence of his plausibility and the pleasantness of his solution, that at least one had himself graduated in spiritualism, and that to reproduce the phenomena obtained in a thousand drawing-rooms by the unaided medium could not be difficult in a hall that had been permanently acquired, and was furnished with many tons of machinery.

The Davenport Brothers passed away, and, like many other celebrated mediums, few persons knew what became of them; how long they stuck to their trade; whether business at last fell off, or the power vanished; and not even where or when they may have died. But after the Davenports arrived Mr. D. D. Home, to whose marvellous manifestations there is a cloud of witnesses, and they, like himself, were frequently of a different order from that of the earlier missionaries. He was not a plebeian and uneducated man, but of moderately good birth, considerable accomplishments, presentable appearance, and some artistic gifts. It may not be doing wrong to his memory to admit, if we are so compelled, that there were possibly some aspects of his private character which were at least lamentable; but he was not, in the ordinary sense of the word, a dishonest man, and there are personal friends known to myself who had years of acquaintance with him in his earlier life, who were not spiritualists and took no interest in his claims, yet they have contributed the testimony of their belief that he was not a conjuror. He was, moreover, subjected to tests and placed under restrictions in which no conjuring could have been effected, while some of the manifestations produced in his person were literally beyond the possibility of simulation, had he brought his own machinery to the doors in pantechnicon vans. In addition to the now world-famed evidence of Sir William Crookes, there is a volume that few have seen in which records of séances with Home appeared in connection with the names of many persons of high position, and they were printed only for the benefit of that particular circle. Many of the experiences related in this volume are altogether outside the domain of legerdemain, and I possess the independent testimony of an old common friend who was present and himself experienced their genuineness. He also is not a spiritualist, and has ultimately been received into the Catholic Church. But placing the Davenports and Home for a moment on the same footing, we see in none of the manifestations produced through their agency any demonstration that they were the work of departed spirits. If we take this fact in connection with certain repeated testimony of many mediums given to Mr. W. H. Harrison, once editor of a paper called *The Spiritualist*, we shall not perhaps see reason to admit that the psychic body of the medium is the exclusive agent in their production, but may be disposed to grant that this is at least a tolerable view.

The Home phenomena, great as their advance was on those of preceding mediumship, had not included the complete materialisation of an alleged spirit form. In the year 1873 the pseudonymous author of the best popular introduction to spiritualism dwells on the fact, and anticipates the possibility of this crowning triumph of what has been termed the higher phenomena. It was destined to be accomplished before many years had passed away in the manifestations, now historic, at the Eddy homestead in America. We know them chiefly through the long chronicle of Colonel Olcott, which is the dividing point of more than one interest in connection with modern practical transcendentalism. The history of the Eddys is not unlike that of the Fox family, with all its details magnified. The two brothers who chiefly figure in the narrative were mere babes in the momentous year of Hydesville, and for their early experiences they owed nothing to spiritualism. The manifestations which occurred in their childhood, and of which they were very often the personal victims rather than the intermediaries, were in one sense far more wonderful than the simple and humble hauntings of the Rochester family by the ghost of a murdered pedlar. It is claimed that the brothers were the playfellows of spirits, literally at bed and board, and that the apparitions, the visions, the spontaneous levitations, and a thousand other mysteries were enacted night and day in the old house. Such, at least, is the story, and because it is so marvellous one is inclined to speculate how far it rests for its authority on the recollections of the mediums themselves. When we hear that the children were deposited frequently on the tops of tall trees at miles' distance and left to escape as they might when they awoke, it would not, perhaps, be wise to attach a high degree of credibility to such stories. One thing, however, appears to be moderately well established, and that is the bitter hatred of the Protestant father to events which dislocated the peace of his household, involving it in receiving innumerable curiosity-seekers, and filling it with uncomfortable episodes. And because it was the kind of hatred which is almost invariably indiscriminate, it pursued the children, whose presence occasioned the troubles, and this very often beyond the confines of ordinary cruelty. The tale of their sufferings might set them sharply in the light of the chief sufferers of the cause, but this, also, we must agree to regard doubtfully, and as seen, like the occurrences themselves, rather through a glass of vision. We can give full credence in any case, and there is doubtless full evidence forthcoming, if it were worth while to collect it, in respect of the next development in their history. When the paid medium began to appear on the scene; when séance-rooms and lecture-halls filled with large concourses of investigators and curiosity-seekers; when gate-money was charged and dollars flowed freely into the coffers of those who trafficked in the new gospel; primitive and Methodist as he was, possessed as he believed his children, much as he had sought to exorcise the devil with blows; the father of the Eddy brothers did not neglect to turn their gift to account when the chance offered. And so there follows another long story of misery in another form, of the child in the test séances, stripped nearly naked, tied on cross-beams, subjected to every kind of indignity, with the father acting as manager and as man at the box-office. It was not again in all probability so bad as it has been depicted, but the central fact is beyond contradiction. When this period passed away, when the lads, despite their treatment, had grown into young men, had become their own masters, they not unnaturally went into business for themselves in the same line, and it was after this that the full materialisations began. They were not of dark rooms and cabinets; there were not forms concealed up to the eyes in drapery, and to be seen only by phosphorescent lights for a moment. As a rule, the séance was held in the homestead garden, and the materialisations may be said to have poured out one after another in twilight and moonlight, free of movement, fully characterised, and as much like ordinary flesh and blood as the historic guests at the necromantic supper of Count Cagliostro. There is one point about them that must be conceded by the critic. Imposture or not, the multitudinous figures were not impersonations by the mediums, for the mediums were in full view. They were not their astral doubles or their psychic bodies, for the succession was too rapid. They may have been the supers of transcendental theatricals hired in gangs for the purpose, though this supposition also has its difficulties, since the sitters did not come and go casually, as at a London professional séance, and had the opportunities of a house-party. In most cases they were visitors from far away, reporters of influential newspapers, persons who made it their business to observe carefully, and the Eddy homestead was, for the time being, their hostelry. Yet the confederates do not seem to have appeared by any accident, though it is certain that they were sought. When the interest began to fall off and the takings diminished, the brothers, who regarded the whole subject from a commercial standpoint, galvanised it for the moment by an opposite series of séances, designed to exhibit how it was all performed; but it is recorded that they reproduced only a few trifling phenomena and still retained their secret. It must not be supposed that the device injured them permanently in the opinion of their believers, as it was already recognised that a tolerable standard of morality or good faith was not essential to mediumship. However, a short time after, the Eddys and their witnesses were lost to sight, and to this day no one here seems to know what became of them.

Materialisation had scarcely exhibited itself in one place than it was found in a swarm of others, and the history of the so-called 'twenty years' communion between the earth and the world of spirits' entered upon a new era. The flagging public interest experienced another awakening, though the enthusiasm was not so contagious. It has been stated that at the beginning of the epoch some thirty thousand mediums were discovered in five years. Materialisation mediums were not proportionally plentiful, but the instances were sufficiently abundant. It must be said at once that few, if any, of its cases occurred under test-conditions which can be regarded as satisfactory, and it is pretty generally admitted that genuine materialisation is the rarest of spiritualistic phenomena, having as such been witnessed by very few. If we allow that it has ever taken place, and endeavour to account for it, we must discard altogether the explanations derived from supposed spirit sources as to its *modus operandi*, for their evidential value is on a level with other explanations of things unknown coming from the same source. The first point to establish is that two materialisations have never taken place simultaneously, unless (*a*) under circumstances when there was an opportunity for the assistance of confederates, or (*b*) when there was more than one medium. To this fact let us approximate another which is as well established as any of the occurrences in question. When full materialisation takes place, and the medium is at the same time within sight of any of the sitters, he is reduced to a senseless heap; he is not merely in a trance, but is, so to speak, deflated. It is as if something bodily had passed out of him. And now let us regard both these points in the light of such evidence as there is for the existence within man of a psychic body which is normally invisible, even when apart from the physical body, because its functions belong to another plane, but is as much force and reality as the material envelope. We shall then be as near a plausible explanation of the alleged phenomena as we are likely to approach.

There can be no doubt that in materialisation the door was opened very wide to fraud, and exposures were multiplied in consequence. The conclusion drawn from them by certain observers is that in most cases the medium did not have recourse to a confederate but trusted to the cabinet, and the darkness which was now everywhere insisted on, and himself impersonated the spirit. To check the disastrous results of the exposures a new tax was laid upon the credulity of the believer, and the theory of so-called 'form-manifestations' was brought forward for this purpose. As it could be no longer denied, it was admitted that in many cases the medium did impersonate, but it was alleged that this was done unconsciously. He was made use of by spirits to economise the power. There are many comparatively able representatives of the cause here in England who have been brought to adopt this view, which seems such a brazen pretext for shielding impostors from disgrace. The discerning individual who first broached the theory cannot now be identified, but for obvious reasons it was taken up and was preached everywhere. It constitutes the final unreason of the whole movement, because admitting that it is true, it is wholly without tolerable purpose; it is neither test nor identity, and to the question *cui bono* there can be no answer.

After the Eddy manifestations and the book which represents them there came the Wolf circle, its recorder, and the record created in a work entitled *Startling Facts in Modern Spiritualism.* They offered altogether a curious instance of an apparently political motive in mediumship, which, having regard to place and persons, if not to time, seems more preposterous than the League of the White Rose. Napoleon B. Wolf was an untiring investigator without any psychic gifts, and he seems also to have been a man of ability and one not readily imposed upon. By the researches which he undertook this Napoleon of spiritualism was brought into communication with the Napoleon of France, his family, and the notabilities by whom they were surrounded. All these persons manifested at the private séances of the circle, usually fully materialised. They did not come to convince the materialist that there was another life, to comfort the bereaved mourner, to confound orthodox eschatology, or for any religious or philosophical motive whatsoever. They came for the restoration of the Napoleonic dynasty in France, and the means by which this end was ultimately to be produced was the materialisation of Napoleon the First, in Paris, for the purpose of addressing the nation in a discourse of some hours' duration. The séances in America were to grow in power so that this object might at length be achieved, and the records of Wolf's experiences are startling indeed. He paid more than one visit to England, to prepare the spiritualists of this country for what was about to take place. There is no need to say that the years of effort were wasted, that the power increased by incessant materialisation came suddenly to nothing through the death of the leader of the circle, or that spiritualism numbered in consequence another ruined project among the unfulfilled plans which have been begotten, *ex hypothesi*, in the world unseen.

Materialisation does not constitute alone and of itself the putative higher phenomena of spiritualism. Properly enough, it is usually the magnetic group of facts, clairvoyance and so forth, which is thus designated; but among things of the physical order which far exceed the rapping and table-turning, there must be included the alleged direct writing and spirit photography. While both of them belong to that first epoch which we have agreed to close with the mediumship of D. D. Home, or some twenty-five years after the appearance of the Rochester knockings, they are not by any means early characteristics of spiritualism. Direct writing was preceded by the so-called automatic writing. Under most circumstances, the evidential value of the latter is of much the same kind as trance-mediumship; that is to say, it is exceedingly slight. When an intelligence, speaking through a trance-medium, gives unchallengeable tests of identity or information which cannot have been known to the medium in his normal state, the question is raised from the ordinary sphere of delusion or imposition, but these are rare exceptions, most of the communications being accepted on the good faith of the medium, or on the general ground that he could not exhibit such ability on normal occasions. It is the same with automatic writing; there are rare instances in which something demonstrably unknown to the person through whom that writing takes place is given to the circle; but there are instances innumerable in which A or B is, by the hypothesis, of honest disposition, and therefore does not deceive, or when the received messages exhibit some alleged distinction from that person in the supposed normal state, as, for example, superior moral elevation, spiritual insight, or literary fluency. There is no need to say that this is a loose and even slipshod method, nor is it sufficient apology to explain that no experienced spiritualists accept such views for more than they are worth. Trance-mediumship in particular is a source of emolument to persons in England, and the demand for it is, no doubt, an encouragement to imposture. Direct writing obtained under good conditions has far more evidential value than the automatic kind, in which respect it differs from the direct voice, the latter being a phenomenon of the dark séance, in which sounds cannot be located readily. It is fairly easy to prepare conditions which would make it impossible to produce direct writing by trickery. A locked slate brought by an investigator who does not lose sight of it offers complete security, and there is strong testimony that writing has frequently been produced under these circumstances. The sceptical explanation which assumes that the locked slate is lost sight of, or is exchanged, is mere trifling, and can weigh nothing against the positive evidence of an inquirer of known good faith in possession of the proper faculties of simple observation. It is fair to add that most investigators have experienced considerable difficulty in getting their own slates used: sometimes the controls are reluctant; sometimes the medium objects; but even when willingness is professed on all sides, abundant writing is obtained on the slate of the medium and none usually on the other. An explanation is sought in magnetism, and this is just as likely to be a makeshift excuse as a description of the genuine difficulty.

What is called spirit photography is the appearance of a more or less shadowy form on a negative under circumstances which are thought to preclude the possibility of its independent manipulation by the photographer. The form may appear in connection with an ordinary sitter, when, if the latter be an honest investigator, and if the form be in direct relation to him, as, for example, bending over him or appearing to hold his hand, it is practically impossible for this result to have been obtained by fraud. An unmistakable likeness is also a tolerable test, but this is in most cases a matter of imagination. On the whole, it must be admitted that the evidences of spirit photography fall far short of demonstration. The testimony of the late Mr. Traill Taylor, an expert in the art itself, is still the best that is at present available, but the subject has been much degraded by indubitable impostures on the part of the photographers who have been concerned in producing the manifestations.

Home's mediumship may be said to have established the cause for spiritualism in England so far as all persons moderately predisposed towards spiritualism were concerned. The subject had now its audience; it had its notable representatives and even its distinguished converts. Dr. Alfred Russell Wallace, who is usually spoken of as the co-discoverer with Darwin of the law of natural selection, had found in it the basis of an answer to the arguments of Hume and others against miracles. Professor Crookes had invented scientific methods for testing several phases of the mediumistic state, and, himself an unimpeachable witness, he produced evidence almost indisputable. While the distinguished naturalist, in spite of the early training of which he has given a detailed account, was inclined to accept the claims of the spiritualist together with the facts of spiritualism, the famous chemist was content with the result of his observations as establishing a new order of facts, saying nothing concerning the agencies or the bearing of the occurrences on any future state of man. Both were, and have remained, the great instances of modern spiritualism in the opinion of the spiritualists, and it may be worth while, perhaps, to dwell a little upon the universal unreason of which this fact is a development, being actually a sort of key to the weakness of their position. It is exceedingly natural for a new cause, which is seeking to assert itself, to make a bid for patronage, and endeavour to command notice under a distinguished name. There are some causes, and we may take charities as an instance, in which this is obviously the best thing to do. When a great name patronises a benevolent institution and appears at the head of a subscription-list, it attracts lesser names and enlists the interest of the subscribing public. It is, in other words, a concession to the weakness of humanity. But in the day when authors published their books under the patronage of a nobleman, that was a bad method of appealing to the public, because, although a great name may be a certain guarantee of good faith as regards a benevolent institution, it is no guarantee as regards the good qualities of a book; and though it may be pardonable for charitable purposes to play upon the weakness and even on the servility of mankind, it is unpardonable in an author, because it endeavours to provide his book with a spurious title to consideration. And now let us inquire whether the name of Dr. Russell Wallace is better as a guarantee for spiritualism than that of an unknown observer. When Dr. Wallace testifies to certain observations on his own part, his name is a guarantee that as an honourable person he is above suspicion, and that he will only testify to the truth as he perceives it. So far the spiritualist is right, but he is wrong in supposing that, because he is a distinguished naturalist, Dr. Wallace is a better observer of exceptional phenomena than other men; and he is wrong also in supposing that Sir William Crookes, because he is the inventor of the radiometer, is thereby better qualified than most other persons to decide that the phenomena of spiritualism are or are not the work of imposture. Incidentally, Professor Crookes has done admirable work in what is termed superphysical research, and is entitled to his high place in the movement, but it is scarcely because he is a chemist. The naturalist and the chemist, as such, have no special place in psychical research; and as a good poet may be a writer of bad novels—Thomas Hood, for example—and a great novelist may be an indifferent versifier — as Charles Dickens — so the chemist and the naturalist may be very poor observers of spiritualistic phenomena. The statement is borne out amply by experience. When Professor Huxley said that, if genuine, such phenomena did not interest him, he illustrated the general incapacity of the mere physicist; when Professor Tyndall said that spiritualism was intellectual debauch, he spoke as one who had dedicated his powers to the investigation of the hypothetical development of the first organic life out of the primordial slime. The weakness which is indicated by all this pride in patronage is really that of a false position. A movement which began badly from the beginning, and has remained so largely in the hands of a suspected class, partly pseudo-religious, yet largely mercantile, pretending to a scientific aspect, yet also partaking of trickery and of the cant which covers it; it has felt strongly the need of some persons known in another line of research to come forward and say that it is not fairly represented by its worst side, and that, raised out of its mire and muddle, it may yet appeal with honour to recognition as a legitimate branch of knowledge.

Strengthened in any case with at least two considerable names, spiritualism contrived to become a cause and a movement in England—when it began, as a matter of course, to produce its newspapers and magazines. Prior to this period the only periodicals which can by any courtesy be regarded as possessing a link with transcendentalism were (*a*) the *Zoist*, which may be said to have represented transcendental therapeutics, as understood by mesmerism; and (*b*) Swedenborgian publications, which certainly represented a communication once alleged to have been established between the seen and the unseen. Now the *Zoist* should remind us that Dr. Elliotson, its founder, was first of all a materialist pure and simple, and next, under the influence of his discoveries along the lines suggested by the experiments of Du Potet in England, a materialist modified by mesmerism—and so far as one can gather, but slightly modified indeed. There is no evidence that animal magnetism performed for him what hypnotism performed for Braid; namely, it did not tend to convince him of the unity of the mind and its distinction from the physical part of man. It must be admitted, however, that in all probability Braid was convinced previously on intellectual considerations, while, for the rest, he was a plain man, whose opinion did not signify. When spiritualism appeared in America, Braid at the same time did not do what might have been expected of him; he did not regard it, if genuine in its claims, as offering any proof of the mind's survival after physical dissolution. Dr. Carpenter had espoused hypnotism, and Braid espoused in turn Dr. Carpenter's theory of unconscious muscular action. Dr. Elliotson, on the other hand, did act as might have been naturally expected when he denounced the new phenomena as an enormous fraud; he did not then stop at unconscious muscular movement and unconscious cerebration, because he was a vehement man. Subsequently, however, he went further; he was led to investigate the subject, and becoming convinced that he had erred, he acted like an honourable person and retracted all that he had said previously against it. But when Dr. Elliotson became convinced of the truth of spiritualism, he went back upon much more than a few violent pages of the *Zoist*. He recovered, in fact, the entire ground of his professional and literary life, and again became a Christian. Perhaps this was another instance of vehemence, for spiritualism, even in those early days, was not quite the revelation which made Christianity a foregone conclusion for those who accepted its wonders. But the act illustrated a certain prevalent frame of mind which was characteristic of the period. It was for many persons an irresistible inference that the imputed demonstration of immortality, or at least of survival, was a demonstration also of that faith which, in some less palpable manner, already claimed to have brought 'life and immortality to light.' We shall, therefore, understand how very natural it was that among the first periodicals to be established in the new interest was one entitled the *Christian Spiritualist*. It did not last many years, and it could not be expected that it should appeal to a very large audience; but it is exceedingly interesting as one memorial of a stage which has now passed away completely. I refer to that which may be said to be embodied in the various attempts to institute a doctrinal and historical identity between primitive Christianity and modern spiritualism. Unless, indeed, in France, no such attempts are made at the present day—though it is recognised in a general manner that Jesus of Nazareth was a medium—because the lapse of half a century has shown everybody that dogmatic Christianity can have no part in spiritualism, as spiritualism has no part therein. When the *Christian Spiritualist* was suspended, another magazine, founded by Mr. Thomas Shorter, and carried on for a space exceeding ten years, represented much the same point of view, though less expressly and less officially. But meanwhile there were rival interests at work. Those whom spiritualism had not reconciled to the doctrines of revealed religion happened—not by necessity, but by an accident of the time, which in this respect was a derivation from the age of Paine—to be noisy, illiterate, and vulgar; and their radical objection to the identification of spiritualism with Christianity was established, as it was perhaps inevitable that it should be, with immoderation and even blasphemy. There is no need to dwell long upon the kind of literature that sprang up, or on the chief centre which represented it, and was as much conspicuous for its advertisements of pamphlets like the 'Mistakes of Moses' and the 'Defence of Atheism' as it was for the 'Philosophy of Death' and 'Life Beyond the Grave.' It is the misfortune of many new movements that they are known by their worst side—in this movement it was the most pronounced side, the most insistent and the cheapest, which we are here sketching, and it was the side, therefore, by which public opinion derived its knowledge of the whole. The mischief did not end in a mere misconception on the part of outsiders who had no real interest. Naturally it attracted its like, and thus the centre of bourgeois spiritualism, combined with vulgar infidelity, became that also of the old and effete cries of 'No Popery' and the new cries of 'No vaccination'—of the last process of the last reformer who had left his wife in America to the lectures and other lucubrations of the emancipated women who denounced marriage and advocated the doctrine of free love.

It was also in centres like these that the cheating medium was sure of his defence. He was caught red-handed, but it was the ill-conditioned circle that attracted the 'unprogressed spirits' to tempt him. He carried the baggage of a conjuror on his tours as a medium, but the real infamy rested with the persons who had dared to trespass on the liberty of the subject by ransacking his private effects. And so the unfortunate cause went on multiplying its disasters and its liabilities, for it was at once the buttress of the needy and the speculation of the penniless, who offered themselves as martyrs because they had elected to attempt an enterprise which they would have shrunk from had they anything to lose. As the time which they devoted to the cause was regarded in the light of capital, so they denounced the selfish believer who remunerated them poorly for the unasked expenditure. It was not perhaps precisely as a counterpoise to the bad effect of the centre, which in somewhat vague terms has been thus described, that in 1873 a new periodical was started under the title of the *Spiritualist.* It may be taken in a general way that the *Medium and Daybreak* represented the interest of the class of persons who lived and trafficked in the messages from the unseen world, and it may be supposed, also in a general way, that the *Spiritualist* was established in the interest of the recipients of the messages and of those who had previously supported their purveyors. It had at least the advantage of conduct by a professional journalist of some ability, and, possibly more than all, it was not otherwise a book depôt. It did not, therefore, import evil pamphlets from America. It was, of course, an unsuccessful venture; it involved its projector in heavy liabilities, against which he struggled honourably, long after the periodical itself had passed away, and which he at length succeeded in surmounting; but it embittered him—though less against the movement itself than against the hands into which it had drifted. In any case, there is no doubt that for the five or six years of its existence the *Spiritualist* exercised a certain purifying influence, and it did what such instruments can do by gathering about itself all those whom the anterior organ had driven away, while it made possible an association of spiritualists that intelligent persons outside the movement could approach for purposes of inquiry without sacrifice of decency. As this association first focussed the movement in England under creditable circumstances, we must look upon it as the source of the subsequent diffusion of interest among the class of minds which that movement, or its best representatives, desired to attract. It counted Dr. Wallace, Professor Crookes, Richard Burton, Roden Noel, and others less or more distinguished in various walks of life, among its guests and among the speakers at its meetings. Its council was composed of responsible persons, and included names known in literature; it instituted meetings and debates, and if its weekly circle for manifestations was neither worse nor better than many, as regards conditions and results, this was not the fault of the association so much as of its slender resources and the commercial instincts of the mediums.

Before the suspension of the *Spiritualist* a paper entitled the *Herald of Progress* came out under other interests, and continued for three or four years without doing much to justify its existence. There was no ability in its conduct and no sign of vitality in its pages—even its title was borrowed from a similar American publication. It was, however, really a provincial enterprise, and as such was the precursor of the *Two Worlds*, which for a long period has enjoyed a considerable circulation in Manchester, and was designed for the requirements of those poorer classes who had accepted spiritualism in the North of England. It is not to be expected that a periodical of the kind should have much appeal to the cultured, but the little paper, within limits, may, perhaps, have fulfilled its humble mission satisfactorily for those whom it concerned, and, perhaps, even without serious breach of good taste for others. Some time after the suspension of the *Spiritualist* the movement received an entirely new impetus by the publication of *Light*, which soon passed under the editorship of a man of culture and literary ability, and has now for many years been the recognised organ of spiritualism in England. The book literature of the subject is not large, and there is, perhaps, little encouragement for its increase. It may therefore be said to be represented most fully, as it is also ably and honestly, by this journal, which has long since attained its majority. The most important occult enterprises of the nineteenth century have been made known to the public in its columns, and many minor interests, which would take their place in an extended history of the subject, have found through the same medium an opportunity to prefer their claims. This is enough to show that the periodical itself is fixed to no special line of thought, at least to the exclusion of others. It has also succeeded where others have failed in earning the respect of all sides, and even the sympathy of a section of public opinion outside transcendental circles in England.

When the first report of the materialisation of spirits came over from America there were numbers here to welcome the event, which had been for some time anticipated, and Colonel Olcott's narrative, already described, produced a deep impression. The history of this particular development in England, as already intimated, has been almost universally disastrous, because manifestations of the kind are specially open to be exploited by impostors. Confederacy, assisted by the dark séance, becomes comparatively easy, and the imposition of the so-called 'form-manifestation' is encouraged by the credulity of the true believer. In those early days, when persons who could tolerate belief believed still more easily than now; when the subject having something of novelty produced enthusiasms which are almost wanting now that it has been abroad in the world and has tinctured life and thought; it is, perhaps, no cause for wonder that the séances for materialisation in England only set us vaguely speculating how any one can have taken them seriously. Looking back upon the strange story of the past, the student will not fail to observe how the various phenomena of spiritualism spread, so to speak, by contagion. I do not refer here so much to the original manifestations when the code was first discovered; the ghosts of all the centuries might well have been waiting the device of that dumb alphabet of the ears. I do not speak now of the trance-mediumship or of the automatic writing, because these things are too far from demonstration and too near to that dark border-line of mystery where deception and self-deception meet and join hands. I mean rather the later and more advanced phenomena which offer testimony of a kind to several senses at once. No sooner had direct writing taken place in a solitary instance than a score and a hundred mediums developed that gift rapidly. No sooner did spirit photography occur, or was supposed to occur, in the dark room of a single photographer than we find it practised everywhere. No sooner were full materialisations reported in the Eddy homestead than they were found at Chicago, Washington, on the platform of the public lecture-room, in the cabinet of the professional medium, and in the domestic circle. Were these emulative spirits everywhere seeking to reproduce and to go beyond the latest marvel, or did trickery, triumphant in Denver, encourage California and Texas to similar feats? And was it easier in each case when the air was full of it, when every frequenter of séances expected it, and by the earnestness of his wish silenced unconsciously all the machinery of test conditions?

Materialisation in England began under Dr. F. W. Monck, whose title to mediumship may bear much the same inspection as his title to an university degree. He was originally a Baptist minister in the West of England, and in this capacity no one had heard of him previously, as no one hears of him now, since he escaped from various complications to America. There are respectable and even eminent witnesses to the reality of his mediumship, seemingly under the best conditions, and speaking of him from personal knowledge under very strange circumstances, long after the disgrace into which he ultimately fell, I am inclined to think that he must have had some powers at some period of his pretensions, while he certainly remained to the end of his career in England a superstitious, as he was also a weak man. But he was more than all an impostor of the worst kind, and as a convicted cheat he suffered justly at the hands of the law. After this no one knew certainly what had become of him, though it was rumoured that he had achieved considerable success in America, and that a great church was built for him where he may still minister to devout believers. The scandal of his exposure did great mischief to the cause of spiritualism, and when Professor Crookes testified subsequently to genuine materialisation through the mediumship of Florrie Cooke, it was, for the moment, insufficient to retrieve so broken a cause. The scandal and its counterblast were followed, moreover, by the Slade prosecution, which did not less aggravate the situation because the indictment practically broke down upon a technical question, and a second trial was impossible owing to the flight of the accused. With such varying fortune spiritualism told over the years between 1870 and 1885. Here was a distinguished scientist describing how he had exhausted the resources of technical knowledge in testing the phenomena at his own house, while lesser men than he, ashamed and enraged, accused him of acting in an unscientific spirit, because they were incapable of seeing that psychical research cannot be pursued under precisely the same conditions as the discovery of a new element. There was the sordid imposture of a professional medium perambulating the country with the *mise en scène* of Aunt Sally and Polichinello. Here were a committee of noblemen and gentlemen recording privately how they had taken coals of fire in their hands at the request of a medium, or had them placed on their heads, without experiencing an undue sensation of heat—how they had witnessed Home elevated in the air, and had followed him with raised hands as he rose towards the ceiling—how they had seen him carried out from a window sixty feet above the ground. There was a miserable newspaper defending the existence of Aunt Sally in the medium's travelling-bag. Here was a special correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* testifying to apparitions seen in a breakfast parlour with a mere child as medium; there the same correspondent was writing bogus confessions of mediums. Here clamorous believers called on men of science to investigate and prove for themselves the reality of their faith; there scientists came forward under the special request, only to discover more fraud, resulting in more prosecutions, flying mediums, and forfeited bail. Here was some conjuror on the Continent making a formal affidavit in the presence of lawyers that the phenomena were beyond reach of any skill on the part of an illusionist; there were Maskelyne and Cooke showing how it could be done, given sufficient machinery; and between both the purblind believer clung to the skirts of Houdin and denounced Maskelyne. In truth, it was a great chaos. Between all the conflicting elements no one noticed that both parties were hopelessly in the wrong as to this last point—the French illusionist for supposing that, in nine cases out of ten, any conjuring skill was required to produce the illusion that was believed in as a manifestation of the spirit world; and all generally for taking notice of anything in Maskelyne's standpoint, because the phenomena were divided into things which the conjuror would not stoop to do, and those which no conjuror ever did under the same conditions. Through such confusion we come to the period of William Eglinton, whose psychography took place in the full light, and his materialisations, if not in light, at least after he had been stripped, clothed in other garments, and placed under the eyes of observers in a house which was not his own and in which he could have no mechanism or confederates. The report of his performances revived the interest in a flagging cause, and with all the prestige of a successful career in England the medium went abroad to manifest his powers in Germany. What happened there has never transpired; but in any case the mediumship of Eglinton came suddenly to a close. With this event the conventional side of spiritualism, as regards anything that is generally accessible in any form by the public, may be said to have ended in England, and the investigation passed on into the hands of psychical research. Trance-mediums continued to speak in trance, and they do so to the present day—this form of manifestation is never likely to die out so long as the occasional guinea is forthcoming at the local meeting-place. And so also a little physical mediumship may be found in obscure back streets, and collects a few shillings on Saturday nights; but it is too slight to warrant the reporting in any spiritualist newspaper, while the fee is too small for any dissatisfied persons to do more than grumble to themselves or their acquaintances. Also, even on platforms similar performances may be witnessed for something less than a contribution to a silver collection. Finally, the unpaid private medium, in certain rare instances, continues to give dark séances at the houses of private investigators, and for some inscrutable reason, he continues also, in cases, to cheat without any commercial provocation.

POWERS OF THE DEEP

HAVING dealt somewhat fully with the development of spiritualistic phenomena, more especially of the advanced kind, both in America and in England, and having given so much of the explanations which have been devised concerning them as may have appeared adequate for the moment, we must now transfer our attention to the history of the subject in France. It is there that we shall meet with the first and most strenuous attempt to create a philosophy of spiritualism, having any intellectual importance, out of the phenomena which comprise it. In America, as we have seen, the revelations of Andrew Jackson Davis, as regards at least their earlier and more considerable phase, had preceded the occurrences, and were everywhere taken over by the spiritualist because they were in consonance therewith. Speaking generally concerning them at all their periods, these revelations were full, as I have intimated previously, of that kind of suggestion which finds response everywhere, so that even, in some rare instances, the deep thinker, provided only that he is sympathetic, sees almost his own depth reflected therein, while the pleasant ripple of the sentiment biologises the shallow man, and because the surface is all bright and sparkling, he thinks that the true glass of vision is held up to Nature. There is seership and there is a certain insight, but it is the seership of somnambulism and not the vigilant perception of an enlightened wisdom. We have Nature's revelations at first hand in many inspired passages of the sceptic Senancour, but we have only presages in Davis; and while the forlorn pessimist of *Obermann* is so cool and so strong, with all his sense of insufficiency, the American prophet is sweet and cloying and sickly. Without any living sense of the supernatural, without any touch of the mystic, without symbol or sacrament, we can only feel that his gospel has no permanent ministry, and is part of that mental region wherein is the paradise of the poetaster. England, on the other hand, at the corresponding period, lacked even the sentiment of the unseen, however reduced and diluted. The religious position of the moment, was, I think, fairly represented by Southey's *Book of the Church*. Enlightened thought on historical and literary subjects was represented by the coarse thoroughness of Macaulay; devotional feeling was interpreted by the accomplished popular preacher, of whom Blount was a typical example and the Rev. Robert Montgomery a lesser case in point. It is true that many signs of a higher form of vitality were being exhibited in connection with the Tractarian Movement; but in this instance the devotion, the enthusiasm, and the intelligence were all dedicated to the restoration of an order which had passed away. It has been effectively described as a protest against the coldness, the neglect, and the selfishness of many within the English Establishment; while it took a considerable number, and those not the least distinguished, to their spiritual repose in the Roman Church, and brought about the restoration of the hierarchy, it was destined to operate still more powerfully within the English communion; but for the moment, at least, it remains true that, so far as the public sentiment and the characteristics of the nation were concerned, the supernatural had passed out of life. Against this general statement can be set the fact that there is one religious movement of the period which deserves a word of mention as embodying a certain sacramentalism, for we are not concerned with the struggles of nonconformist bodies in search of the charter of their liberty. The development of a doctrinal church of the Second Advent, under the name of Catholic and Apostolic, out of the visions and enthusiasms of the gifted Edward Irving, for one moment exhibited some tokens of vitality, but has remained, like the chief building which represents it, a fragmentary splendour. Under the influence of the original leaders, it showed a certain trace of transcendentalism, connected with the 'gift of tongues,' but Irving himself was obviously the electrifying agent, and all the powers and faculties were withdrawn when he passed suddenly away. The pathetic pilgrimage of certain earnest people in quest of vestments and rituals was already the decoration of the dead, and the Catholic Apostolic Church at the present day, as regards horizon, mission, and effectuality, is like the New Church of Swedenborg.

It was the product of an enthusiasm, much as another movement, ostensibly religious in its nature, is supposed to have been a product of imposture, and this also has just so much of connection with the subject in hand as must entitle it to a word of mention.

Having regard to the evidential value and its absence in a considerable class of phenomena which have been officially accepted by a large number of believers as a part of the transcendental movement, we have no real right to exclude the putative Mormon revelation from possessing its part therein, at least among the sorry appurtenances. It is assuredly entitled to a place among the precursors of modern spiritualism, and this has been recognised in many independent directions by writers who represent the school of spiritualism both in America and England. Occurrences which rest for their authenticity on the word of Joseph Smith have a prior analogy in the great case of Mahomet, and in a thousand minor cases subsequently, including all those, the literary result of which has been books innumerable produced—by their claim at least—either in the mesmeric trance or by automatic writing. We are not concerned here with establishing a standard of criticism, but even justice should help us to recognise the fact that where there has been an indiscriminate acceptation of a large class of literature as ultra-normally produced, it is somewhat arbitrary to exclude a single production, with titles not more invalid, from inclusion in really the same class. The ordinary historian has long since abandoned as untenable the view that the Messiah of Islâm was a simple impostor. But the Book of Mormon is precisely in the position of the Koran, in respect of the allegation of its origin, while if we select the most notable of the later instances, the same argument which has been educed in support of a supernatural origin for *Nature's Divine Revelations*, perhaps, should exonerate Smith from the charge of deliberate fraud. It is usual, however, to quote Mormonism as the only historical instance of a religion which has arisen through direct imposture, as it is usual, even among persons who are not professed spiritualists,to speak in terms of respect of the pretensions attaching to the first inspiration of Andrew Jackson Davis. The theory that he could not have produced himself this signal monument of spiritualism obtains perhaps equally in the case of the anterior work, though it was not a signal monument. We are not called upon to discriminate between them from the literary or philosophical point of view. This consideration has no value, and the later history of the one will bear comparison with the later literature of the other, some of which has a very strong complexion of dishonesty, nor do I know that as an interpretation of God's word to humanity there was at any time much choice between them.

The chief reason for citing both these experimental and amateur systems of religion is to register once and for all that there is nothing in the nature of spiritualism, whether as explained by its own apostles or recognised and accounted for independently after another manner, which can offer any material towards the formation of an ecclesiastical system. The statement is not less than praise from the standpoint of spiritualism's chief exponents, but it is recorded here simply to clear the issues. The attempt has been made over and over again, owing usually to American initiative, and it has been invariably a failure when it has not called for designation under some stronger name. Further than this, spiritualism does not offer any material to religion, as apart from ecclesiastical systems; it is not under any aspect a process of reunion between God and the soul, and as such it can have no ministry in respect of the life of the soul. It is a question of facts and of the conclusions which are derivable from facts, and are therefore the materials of philosophy, with a ministry to the life of the mind. It is only an accident of the subject that the materials and the ministry have failed in the matter of their effect.

At the same time, it remains that England, unlike America, had no philosophy, 'harmonial' or otherwise, to which the facts of spiritualism could be married with satisfaction to both parties, and what is more it produced none. It gave relief from conventional doctrines on the subject of life beyond the grave to those who desired that relief; it occasioned various speculations as to the conditions of unseen life, but it originated no school. On the mental constitution of France a different result was produced, which did not, however, lead it to the construction of religious systems.

It is, perhaps, too speculative to affirm that, in things psychical and transcendental, that which is artificial and induced is more common in an artificial nation, but spontaneity was wanting to the phenomena of spiritualism in France. More than one society for psychical research has died of inanition because of the paucity of the occurrences which such institutions exist to study. We may turn over the long records of séances representing all schools, but we find next to nothing of that materialisation of spirits which in America and England is considered the most convincing and desirable of the manifestations. Indeed, the physical side is almost confined to the early phenomena of the tilting table and to the direct knockings; on the other hand, the subjective phenomena, clairvoyance and communications in the trance state, are abundant; and it is to be noted that this is in consonance with the devotion of the French people for more than a century to mesmerism, its connections and its differentiations. For these reasons we can readily understand that the philosophical side of the movement came more prominently into view, and that long before England had dreamed of generalising seriously on the phenomena, the seers, and more especially the seeresses, across the channel, under the ægis of those who controlled them, whether in or out of the body, had already developed their intellectual systems of the universe.

At this period we must take it for granted that scarcely any one in France was acquainted with more than the rumour of the Davis group of eschatological doctrine. Advanced as the subjects now are, and much as the interest has grown, there is scarcely one of the Paris occultists or spiritists who knows anything of the existing occult or psychological movement in England, as presented by its literature. The limitations of knowledge must have been much greater in the year 1850, and especially in the days of Cahagnet, whose revelations, obtained by intermediaries in the state of trance or lucidity, have been the subject of some reference previously. Yet the eschatology is practically the same. The same pathological conditions may be expected, however, to produce similar results, and the spiritual universe does not differ substantially in the revelations of Davis and in the 'arcana of the future life' unveiled by the clairvoyants of Cahagnet. It is not to much purpose, in dealing with information which under no circumstances can be regarded as reliable on either side, to appreciate their comparative value. Those of the French school are more interesting, tender, and fascinating, as they are, perhaps, less of the bourgeois order, to us, at least, on whom some of the shades and distinctions of French taste are possibly lost. On the other hand, they did not go so deeply to the heart of things, and this is intelligible enough among people to whom an epigram well pointed is as conclusive as an axiom. Common to both there is a clearness of conception which contrasts very strongly, let us say, with Boehme or Saint-Martin; there is nothing, as in these writers, which seems occasionally to outrage reason, though there may be much that cheapens it, and yet for all that have eyes to see there is the true matter in these mystics and there is none in the others. What an *Ecce Homo* would the Unknown Philosopher have written for grand, beloved duchesses concerning this new philosophy of somnambulism, had he been living in 1850! There were no mystics in France at that date, no handbooks to indicate the way, the truth, and the life; but there were many gentle spirits and many loving spirits, and many accomplished and amiable persons who found a kind of ministry in these *Arcanes* of Cahagnet; and though the sphere of their influence has vanished, and though his school itself may be said to have long passed away, one recurs to his volumes, always with a sense of fascination, and forgets in their pleasant mediocrity the vain regret that among all those voices of the dead, and among all those travellers returned, no one has ever had a real message.

The clairvoyants of Cahagnet were still prophesying, when a dominant mind arose and asserted itself concerning the new gospel and its evidences. Allan Kardec was perhaps the only man with an approach to greatness who has ever been produced by spiritualism. Many great minds have been *en rapport*, some in distinct connection with it; but they have not, so to speak, been produced within its fold. Allan Kardec was. He has no literary, no intellectual, no social existence apart from it. He also gave it a purpose, a horizon, above all, a doctrine. It was he who created French spiritualism, using seers and their visions, mediums and their controls, as so much potter's clay to take the impression of his will. It is not entirely clear how it was that Allan Kardec became so possessed by the doctrine of reincarnation. It was unheard of in America at the period. More than thirty years after, and this is within my own knowledge, there were mediums practising to whom the term was perfectly unknown. Kardec, it should be observed, was not a man of wide philosophical reading; he knew nothing at first hand of Grecian thought, nor was his attitude a consequence of psychological experience on his own part. Like Cahagnet, he was not himself a seer, but in a much truer and larger sense than that of mere conventional usage, he was a controller of spirits, both in this world and that which is regarded as beyond it. The suggestions of his imperious conviction passed through to all his subjects; and every sensitive with whom he came into contact, through every stage of their ecstasy; and every ministering ghost, however high its ostensible claims to consideration, and with whatever titles it presented itself, was coerced into countenancing that conviction, or was literally driven away by this turbulent master of seers. He not only founded a school by his persistence, which is an orthodoxy of transcendental Paris, and has collected under its ensign whatever is most tolerated and most considerable in the gospel of demonstrative faith; but, speaking generally, where spiritualism prevails in the romance countries, it is that of Allan Kardec, whose memory is a devotion among his followers, and his tomb in Père la Chaise a place of pilgrimage and sanctity.

When we come to examine his system, it is clear that we must, in the first place, set aside the supermundane testimony, which from the standpoint of spiritualism is its chief bulwark. Admitting for the moment the contention of the entire movement, namely, that the dead do return and do speak through mediums, it would seem at first sight conclusive if year after year their voices were raised in support of a special doctrine. But as a fact it is nothing of the kind, despite the seeming consistency; on all such matters those voices reflected merely the mind of the circle to which their appeal was made; and, further, in this case of a determined and dominant mind, possessing an unbounded enthusiasm on a given point, they reflected above all that point. All those volumes of testimony which were published by Allan Kardec, and were evangels for his followers, prove nothing but the force and tenacious energy of his own belief—tenacious for ignorant humanity, especially in France, when once within the sphere of its operation, but more so a hundredfold for the poor figments of will and intelligence which answered his evoking processes. Stripped of this testimony, the doctrine of reincarnation remains based upon a construction of certain facts, such as the inability of heredity to account for extreme manifestations of genius in early childhood, and on alleged cases of the sporadic recollection of some former life. Now, the exponents of evolution have abandoned the hypothesis of the exclusive origin of species by reason of the perpetuation of minute accumulative variations, in favour of sudden, important divergences; and if we may take this physical analogy, it is more reasonable to account for divergence from intellectual type after a similar manner; and thus reincarnation is not necessary to explain the unaccountable gifts of a Mozart, or of a calculating child.

Alleged recollections are still less entitled to be regarded as evidence, for, on the most lenient assumption, they may be either the result of suggestion or of subjective hallucination. It is notorious that nothing can be inferred philosophically from vague predispositions of this kind. Speaking from within the sphere of spiritualism, the best evidence against the doctrine of reincarnation is that in the absence of suggestion from a circle, it is never taught by the communicating spirits, who would be just as ready under the same circumstances to substantiate the Trinitarian dogma or to defend the canons of the Council of Trent. All this is perfectly clear to those who, while admitting the facts on which the doctrine of spirit intercourse is founded, deny all authority and all credibility to spirit messages. It must be confessed, however, that to those who accept such messages as a real source of knowledge, the diffusion and consistence of the Kardec school of teaching must suggest many difficulties. Beliefs of their own which they regard as supported by the evidences of spiritualism may be in much the same position as French reincarnation, but if they deny the operation of suggestion, then the doctrine in question comes really from the spirit world.

It should be added that, in spite of this doctrine, which approximates Kardec to several schools of occultism, he was not in any sense either mystic or occultist. He derived nothing from the secret sanctuaries, and did not know that there were sanctuaries. He had no affiliation with any of the orders which at that time continued to be in a state, so to speak, of negative existence—not quite dead and not in any sense alive, just saved from dissolution by the links of a few members who, at the moment, seemed unlikely enough to find philosophical heirs. In the same manner, his recognition of the phenomena of spiritism does not appear to have been accompanied by the recognition of the phenomena of asceticism and of mystical sanctity in the past; for he was a man of restricted mental horizon. Unconsciously to himself, he has his place all the same in what is termed the occult movement.

If, outside the doctrine of reincarnation, we turn now to inquire after the religion of spiritualism in France,—by which I mean not any attempt to erect it into an ecclesiastical system, but its particular attitude towards already existing systems—we shall find that as it was largely an anti-clerical country—or that as this, at least, was the advanced spirit of the time—so the dead testified anti-clerically. Allan Kardec also, as need not be said, was no lover of the priests; at the same time he was not a pronounced anti-Christian, and hence his spirits were inclined more or less tentatively to profess a colourless and qualified Christianity, which may be termed natural to distinguish it from the divine kind. Further, Allan Kardec had a leaning toward the notion that there was an inner sense in the Bible. It was not the inner sense of Pope Gregory the Great, nor of Boehme, nor of Swedenborg, nor of Saint-Martin. But its complexion, as something drawn from very far away, has a certain tincture and semblance analogous to the last three, and in this way we come to have a thinly mystical interpretation of Genesis dictated by the spirits and edited, not exclusively in the literary sense alone, by Allan Kardec. And as the natural and so-called divine revelations of Andrew Jackson Davis had something to say of Christ's mission, and gave us, therefore, a genuine Jesus, whom we will term the first genuine saviour of the putative order; and as the clairvoyants of Cahagnet, who had never heard of reincarnation and were not slow to deny it when it was produced by Allan Kardec, because it had not occurred to Cahagnet, had also something to tell us of the real Christ behind the four gospels, whom we will call the second genuine saviour; so the controls and the ministering spirits of the Kardec group produced also from the same sacred texts a reincarnating genius whose transmigrations were proved, to the satisfaction of the people concerned, out of the mouth of the literal gospel Christ, in which way we come to have the third genuine saviour. Within the first twenty years of its existence, spiritualism, among other gifts, offered freely to the world many real portraits of the Master whom Paul had misconstrued and John had not known, each of which were mutually exclusive, and each vouched for by the spirits. Since that period it has manifested yet other Christs, of whom two are comparatively recent, and a third, of an entirely new pattern, is perhaps now in course of construction, outside spiritualism, by the modern school of theosophy.

It must be understood, however, that as in America and England there are many grades and degrees of spiritualists who will have no Christs, official or unofficial, so in France there are a few groups who will not have the Zohar of Allan Kardec, or any of his light burden of philosophy and doctrine. The most current opinion in these quarters is that Jesus of Nazareth is mythological, however we understand Him, and in this way we have the hundredth or thousandth genuine spirit revelation on the whole subject, which we may agree to characterise as the gospel minus Christ. Thus, in France, as elsewhere, the religion of the spirits embodies the innumerable variants of private revelations in which Christ has been found to be Osiris, because on one occasion people of the calibre of Mr. William Oxley once made a tourist's pilgrimage to the Valley of the Nile.

It may be true that spiritualism does not stand altogether alone in being everywhere at cross purposes on its own subject, or, rather, on the class of subject concerning which its alleged inspirers are *ex hypothesi* in a position to know more than any one; and there is not in this respect that clear distinction between the new and old phenomena of transcendentalism which would be desirable from the standpoint of those who profess both. For as there are schools of spiritualism, so, also, there are occult orders, and they, too, are at grave difference with one another, not only as to the particular claims of their traditions and the particular variations of their practice, but as to the fundamental points in the concealed doctrine of which they all claim to be the custodians.

Side by side with the growth of the Kardec school there proceeded in various directions the growth of the school of mesmerism, to which it is necessary that once more and finally we should now refer. By its own claims it was more than the precursor of spiritualism; it was either its foundation or alternative. This is so much the case that, within the last decade of years, it was possible—in the opinion of the school—for an exponent of animal magnetism in Paris to lay before a London International Congress a distinct plea for the recognition of the mesmeric trance as a means of communication with the world of soul which is equal, if not superior, to spiritism. The hostility of official science to the phenomena of mesmerism in the land which was its nursery, was not less pronounced than that which it has encountered from time to time in England. As here, so there, the professional man who dared to espouse it became ostracised in the very act; as here, so there, the language of the professional press was not less than acrid when referring to the subject or to its exponents. But there also, as in this country, it was year by year becoming more difficult in the face of facts for ever accumulating to ignore those facts. As regards England, there was the crucial case of Esdaile's mesmeric mission in India. Everybody knows that the narrative published concerning it was true in all particulars; no one has come forward to deny it; no one has dared to challenge it; no one, except the mesmerist, could pretend to explain it. At last Braid appeared with a variation of method and a totally different hypothesis, by which it was possible to understand the facts, in a measure, while it had the not less momentous consequence of still keeping the mesmerists in the wrong. Elliotson was not vindicated because the lancet case of the Manchester surgeon threw subjects into the condition of catalepsy; he was still the champion of a doctrine which time after time had been proved to be that of delusion mingled with imposture. As regards France, there was in the field one man whose success was not less marvellous, not less well attested, and much more varied than Esdaile's. He, as an original genius in his own field of experience, is of a different order to Elliotson, and he had no less tenacity, no less courage, possibly because he had less to lose and had lost it less. This was Baron du Potet. It was scarcely possible to place him among charlatans, and it was scarcely possible to ignore him. He filled all Paris with the noise and excitement of his experiences, his séances, his discoveries, his sensational claims. He was not a man of scientific attainments, but for all who had eyes to see he was in possession of an instrument by which he worked what passed for prodigies, and though the Academy of Medicine and the Academy of Sciences were pledged to possess no sight in the direction of such occurrences, it was much to be feared that the world would not long consent to be permanently blind or hoodwinked. Some at least of the elementary secrets previously reserved in the occult sanctuaries had been placed by him within the hands of the ordinary observer, and he directed the mind of research towards the hidden sciences of the past, as he held that all the phenomena of transcendentalism were to be explained by his particular art. In the year 1843 James Braid relieved, as we have seen, the stress and burden in England; and in the year 1850, on the very eve of his death, he offered various little pamphlets to M. Azam, the well-known scientist of Paris, as a mark of his regard, and to memorialise the French Academy of Medicine on the subject of his discovery. The memorial was referred to a committee, of which M. Azam was a member, and he gave some account of his own experiments on the subject. In this way it came about that the stress and tension began to weaken also in France, and we have contemporary evidence of the fact that it was possible for distinguished scientists and holders of all kinds of degrees, on condition of good behaviour, to practise transcendentalism of a kind under the name of hypnotism, though it would have cost them their tenure of office, their present reputation, and all their future prospects, had they ventured to do precisely the same thing under the name of mesmerism. There was really no deception about the matter. Braid, the discoverer of the new method, was never quite able to determine whether he produced a state which was analogous to that of animal magnetism, or one that was pathologically different, and assuredly there was no one in Paris who could throw any light upon the subject. All, indeed, were conscious secretly that this new thing called hypnotism was the old thing formerly called mesmerism, but without its obnoxious theory of an imponderable fluid, and without its charlatanising, supernatural, and impossible elements—that is to say, all which was included under the distinction of higher phenomena. Thus did official science in Paris make light of the profound maxim of Confucius and seek to change the name without changing the thing. The great scientific reviews and great literary reviews assigned a place of honour to papers on hypnotism, and it was agreed on all sides that the mesmeric analogies should not be mentioned. They were not mentioned accordingly, or, if that woful craze did have a passing notice, it was on occasions when points could be scored successfully against it—a policy perfectly well known to medical periodicals in England before hypnotism had been conceived.

The French mind, however, has a singular love of speculation; the mere fact is arid until an hypothesis has been devised to account for it; and to be in the presence of a number of facts not accounted for, or accounted for in an unpalatable manner, is a martyrdom to French culture. Braid confined his hypothesis to a modest notion about the paralysis of the nerve-centres of the eye, which was childishly incapable of accounting for the exaltation of the moral faculties in hypnotism, to cite only one feature recognised by himself in the whole complex case, and was voided of all office when the subject happened to be blind. It was, therefore, not long before those most interested in the subject in Paris began to speculate, and Dr. Philips, otherwise Dr. Durand de

Gros, proved himself a giant of invention. At the present day it is a little difficult to follow the philosophical and physiological labyrinth through which he took the hearers of his lectures. They were not without ingenuity to recommend them, and they were certainly not without a considerable literary gift to adorn their presentation, so they enchanted a few people for a few hours accordingly, after which they passed away, not because the bubble had burst, for Dr. de Gros was in truth a very able man, but because the wonder itself was for the time being exhausted. Hypnotism had served its temporary purpose; it had saved the scientific situation, and once the relief had been obtained, the specific which had been the instrument ceased to interest any one. Or, at least, it concerned only a few investigators, of whom little was heard for the next twenty years. On the next occasion it will surprise no one that the revived subject excited scarcely less wrath than mesmerism, for the intervening period had permitted the two processes to become confounded, so that Dr. Charcot of Paris and Dr. Luys of Nancy suffered scarcely less persecution than had befallen Elliotson in England. It is to be observed also that in the interval which we have mentioned, spiritualism had not only taken root in France, but had produced some strange flowers of a growth obnoxious to official science; and having its analogies with hypnotism as well as mesmerism, all these were identified. Under such conditions were established the schools of La Charité and Salpetrière, or, rather, their bases were laid. These schools at last triumphed over opposition, brought tardy renown to the founders, and a postponed, yet a full recognition of the place, the importance, and some few of the possibilities of the new science.

Nothing can be less transcendental than the motives which led either to the research or its recognition. It was prior to the time when the mystic revival took place in France; and it was not in the hands of the persons through whom it took place; even at the present day it is pursued chiefly by mere materialists, and is quoted in the interests of material science. It does not less serve the transcendental purpose, nor does it belong less to the transcendental movement on this account; but we must beware of confusing interests which were actually opposed. No demonstration of the unity of the mind was seen or desired in the French schools of hypnotism; no contribution to teleology entered into the scheme; and, indeed, the conclusion which professional investigation reached in France was the very antithesis of Braid's, for hypnotism was regarded as having demonstrated the physical basis of mind, being thus an argument in the hands of the atheist rather than the mystic. Outside the professional circles different views prevailed, and Papus, the pupil of Richet and Luys, has long placed himself at the head of the occult school of hypnotism, as of many other related schools, and has even boldly affirmed its connection with magic. This, as we know otherwise by the history of animal magnetism, and by our last reference to Du Potet, is not a new contention; indeed, it was no novelty when it was propounded, not without skill, years ago by Colquhoun in England, because Ennemoser had preceded him in Germany; but, of course, in the hands of the French transcendentalists it has taken an entirely new shape, and has a far stronger warrant, because it is based on a better understanding of the term magic, and on a far later and far fuller understanding of what is really involved in mesmerism and in its disputed *alter ego*.

The three writers, Du Potet, Ennemoser, and Colquhoun, formed together an interesting group whose views represented the period prior to the manifestation of modern spiritualism, and have therefore to be checked thereby. To indicate the position briefly: at the very moment when the representatives of the three chief countries of Europe had decided by their most able exponents that all past supernaturalism was to be accounted for by the phenomena of animal magnetism; when also an independent observer in England, having a process of his own which was destined to put a new complexion on the whole subject, and to receive a grudging approbation and sanction in the high places of official science, had himself reached a very similar conclusion in the case of hypnotism—at that moment a new order of conditions had already declared itself, which order animal magnetism, in common with its alternative, was quite powerless to encompass, at least as it was practised and understood by those of its professors who did not pass over into the camp of the spiritualists. Or if the old art could still be regarded as covering the new field of observation, it now became necessary to suppose that the mesmeric operator was at work on the unseen side of life.

In this way, though spiritualism in France continued to be dominated by the Kardec school, it had not only sporadic rivals but also its permanent competitor in the school of animal magnetism, which, as it had very long and very clearly endeavoured to set forth the connection between mesmerism and the supernaturalism of the past, so it was not disposed to give way before this new claimant which interpreted the phenomena of old by means of new manifestations. Neither in England nor America was there such a competitor possible, for, in the first place, mesmerism was not so solidly established with federated interests; while, secondly, spiritualism in both these countries had a far larger group of phenomena on which it could insist, and at least professed to exhibit manifestations from which mesmerism by its nature was precluded. We may take materialisation as the best case in point; to this mesmerism offers nothing that is in the least analogous. Its most advanced school—that which supposes the spirit of the subject to detach itself from the body of the subject and go actually and literally to places at a distance—does not pretend that such spirit in its detachment or travelling can be normally visible to the physical eye or present itself in any solid manner, so that it can be grasped and measured and even weighed. There has, therefore, been no pretence in England or America that animal magnetism can perform what is claimed for spiritualistic processes, but in France, as we have seen, there are few materialisations; there is little direct writing; and until comparatively recently there was no attempt at spirit photography. At the same time, animal magnetism was not an altogether serious competitor with the school of Kardec, for its history shows it to have had very little concern with the unseen world before the rise of spiritualism, and it is still only occasionally that it ventures on this ground. As elsewhere, it is mainly therapeutic in its concern, and its offices outside this sphere are, and have been, simply for purposes of demonstration. In therapeutics, also, it began, and here is its proper, as it is, indeed, its only recognised sphere.

From this consideration of France in its connection with modern spiritualism, I have purposely reserved for the time being, so far as might be possible, all reference to the occult transcendentalism of France—to that body of imputed knowledge which depends for its credentials, its history, and also for knowledge concerning it, on a perpetuated tradition communicated, after one or another manner, by the processes of initiation. I have put aside further the minor revelations and missions of particular prophets, which, in most cases, were phenomena without lasting consequences. We have seen, as broadly as can be here sketched, how the French movement has sought to explain itself. We have next to consider, a little more at large than previously, what has been thought upon the same subject in Germany, and for this purpose we must have recourse in the first instance to the year 1824, which, it will be observed, is long anterior to the Rochester knockings.

At this time Dr. Kerner was studying the phenomena presented by the Seeress of Prevorst—he, a born mystic and poet, constitutionally directed towards the inner life—she, perhaps, the most gifted instance of introvision, with coincidents of the physiological order, which can be found in the nineteenth century. Boehme, Swedenborg, the Seeress of Prevorst, and Andrew Jackson Davis all connect together by the sweeping range of their clairvoyant faculties—the economy of the whole universe being the theme of all. None of these owed anything to spiritualism, as we now understand the term, and yet this wonderful characteristic all possessed in common with the revelations of mediums. Of these last the profession and *raison d'être* is to transmit some knowledge of the state of man after death, but the messages are a chaos of confusion which can contribute nothing to general knowledge, so that after more than sixty years of incessant testimony there is no sober person who can say that a single specific point has been definitely cleared up beyond the possible facts, firstly, of survival, and, secondly, of the falsity of the old ill-reasoned analogy which says that as the tree falls so it shall lie. In like manner, the four independent seers who have interpreted the cosmos transcendentally, according to their own knowledge at first hand, have none of them told us the same thing. The differences between Boehme and Davis are singularly acute and fundamental, and between them are the two others, forming anything but a juncture, and having little beyond their subject in common with each other. It is a painful comment on the outcome of transcendental research. At the same time they each enter into and connect with the movement of modern spiritualism, of which, all unconsciously to themselves, they were the prophets and precursors; and, much as they may differ from each other, they have this resemblance in common, that they all contributed to make spiritualism possible.

When the tide of spiritualistic manifestations entered the Germanic states it may be said to have passed apparently beyond the limits assigned to its encroachment. I have previously indicated that America, England, and France seem to be the proper field of the Rochester knockings, and they have produced no great impression elsewhere. In Germany, however, it is possible to point to several cases of investigation attended with remarkable and now historical results, and it must be admitted further that there are groups here and there, not only of observers, but of persons who have passed from the stage of experiment to that of inferred knowledge. If there were any early investigators of the subject in Germany we do not know their names or the history of their researches; we do know that Fichte, towards the close of his life, admitted fully the claims of spiritualism, and, speaking as one who knew, declared that no one should keep silence; but this was many years after the epoch of the Rochester knockings. The utterance in question must have had its weight, though Fichte outlived the original magnitude of his influence. Later on, Hartmann, who acquired an immense reputation, almost European for the moment, by his *Philosophy of the Unconscious*, assumed that the accumulated evidence for spiritist phenomena justified its removal from the empirical and the assignment of its place in philosophy by means of a metaphysical doctrine designed to cover the facts. The unpopular cause gained at the expense of its exponent without affording much gratification to its real apostles beyond the acquisition of a distinguished convert, for the philosophical doctrine by no means satisfied the believers in spirit return, because, as a matter of fact, the spirit did not return at all in the thesis of Dr. Hartmann.

The impulse thus given to the study of the phenomena brought in due time two other philosophical investigators into the field, namely, Carl du Prel and Hellenbach. Du Prel's *Philosophy of Mysticism*, as his chief work is somewhat inexplicably called, is ostensibly and really an induction from the experiences of dreaming which is not fundamentally distinct from the position of Fichte, who has been already cited, and, as such, it has no special connection with spiritualism. But it appeals also for its support to the evidence offered by the latter for the existence of an undiscovered region of man's subconscious nature. In this respect the works of Hartmann and Du Prel should be noted as establishing the real origin of the theory of the subconscious self, which many persons regard as an hypothesis invented by psychical research in England. As a fact, it seems to have been appropriated here without much acknowledgment of the claims of its real owners. However, Dr. du Prel seems, himself, to have established the precedent, for that which he set out to demonstrate inductively was *a priori* affirmed by Fichte, to whom he does not allude. It is, perhaps, not necessary to add that it has been an intuition of many poets and seers. When the old English poet declared that 'all which interests a man is man,' when Omar Khayyám or his translator, speaking in the person of the soul, cried, 'I, myself, am heaven and hell,' both after their own manner were indicating the doctrine of the subconscious self. Even at the root of the majestic theological doctrine concerning the Beatific Vision, it may be questioned whether this notion is not found in disguise, since it is in virtue of its capacity for containing or reflecting the all that the soul of man can behold the all; and it would seem further that this is what is intended by some of the more mystical alchemists when they speak of the thing contained being greater than the thing which contains it.

Baron Hellenbach advocated a distinct thesis, not, however, exclusive of the other—namely, that birth and death are a change in the form of perception, involving no transit from one world to another, and so implicitly disposing of the objective side of the 'spheres' of spiritualistic philosophy. Two things must impress the reader on the mere enunciation of this view—one that it is extremely plausible, and the other that there are no available facts from which it can be established inductively. It is, however, on the facts of spiritualism that Hellenbach bases his hypothesis. The appearance of 'Birth and Death' brings us to a period in Germany which is practically coincident with the Slade prosecution in England. When that medium fled from further persecution he took refuge in Germany, and the action called forth all the capacities of his alleged gift. The manifestations in his presence which took place under the observation of the astronomer Zöllner surpassed anything that had been recorded of him previously, and seemed even to eclipse for a moment the Home phenomena. The test conditions under which they occurred appear to have left the opponents of the subject no resource except by assuming the insanity of the witnesses, which, in an indirect manner, may be regarded as a triumph for spiritualism. By this time the latter had taken as much root in Germany as it was likely to obtain. Its interests were represented by Du Prel's monthly magazine, entitled *The Sphinx*, and also by that of Aksakoff, though the latter was really established in the interests of Russian research, which was not permitted to publish its results except in a foreign language.

In each of the countries which have passed under our rapid review, the subject of inquiry has now been brought practically up to the present time; for an exhaustive history there is naturally much which might be added, but it is not vital or essential. We have next to consider the amelioration of opinion which has taken place concerning spiritualism, and the causes which have operated therein.

I have indicated in the first part that there were certain forces at work in England with a view to effect the cleansing, if not the consecration, of the perplexed sanctuary in which the 'proof palpable of immortality' was supposed to manifest for the consolation of those average mortals who, after all the centuries of Christianity, were yet unequipped with any warrant to assure them that man, who is externally dust, had yet within him some principle which was demonstrably apart from the earth into which his ashes are returned. There is no need to say that these forces were inadequate to the task assigned to them. There were other influences needed if this Alsatia of the intelligence was to be transformed into a Mayfair of the mind, with its rookeries exterminated and its tortuous ways enlarged into broad and wholesome thoroughfares. There is no need also to say that, despite any ameliorating influences, the transformation can never be said to have taken place completely, for the new influences, although they were passed through spiritualism, can scarcely be said to have absorbed it, or on the other hand to have been assimilated thereto. This notwithstanding, the combination and consequent interconnection of the various forces at work have succeeded in at least one point; if they have not raised spiritualism from the purlieus, they have at least effected an almost radical change in the mental characteristics of the age on all subjects which connect with the greater issues, and they have made materialism impossible. It does not now signify that Professor Huxley, as already noted, remarked once that the phenomena did not interest him, supposing that they were genuine, or that Tyndall defined their investigation as a saturnalia of the mind; it does not signify that the school of Haeckel and the Monists has qualified the belief in immortality almost in terms of opprobrium, or that the presidents of folk-lore societies have classed it with the delusions of mania. If all these things have not passed away in their entireness, they have become negligible, and accordingly they are now ignored. This result has been reached in the most satisfactory of all manners—in the face, that is to say, of an opposition from the accepted high places of scientific thought which recalls rather the spirit that prompted the Albigensian Crusades than the sobriety of procedure which should characterise an application of reasonable inferences from facts considered dispassionately. It has now become possible to look at the whole subject, and at every side of the subject, with that species of detachment which is the keynote of the present papers, and to cease from denying that of which, in the words of Saint-Martin, the whole world is full, without, at the same time, being in any respect committed to the explanations or the opinions of the believers. There is no doubt that this is a very profound and important modification, and, perhaps, at the present day we are not entirely in a position to appreciate its consequences fully. With some of these consequences we may, however, deal slightly a little later on, when we come to offer some interpretation of the transcendental phenomena as a whole, and to show that the most catholic conclusion concerning them is not, after all, one of any novel kind; that, in spite of certain distinctions, spiritualism and its connections take, after all, their proper and logical place in the history of those so-called abnormal occurrences which are older than any history.

Having given in broad outline some sketch of the movement from its inception up to the present time, so far at least as certain countries are concerned, we have now to look a little more closely at the general philosophy of the subject, using this expression under all reserve, in its most restricted application, and a little more closely also at the particular circumstances which have arisen within and without the movement to make it less unacceptable, so that after being tolerated it has come almost to be acknowledged implicitly.

I do not conceive that there has been anything at any time in spiritualism *per se* to account for this reversal of opinion, the growth of which was in the first place coincident with the decadence of the phenomena, while such phenomena as remained, and are still among us, are not characterised by any higher quality of environment or order, nor do they occur among persons more tolerably entitled to our consideration than was the case in the past. This is equivalent to saying that the reputable and the even distinguished names which, as noted previously, have from time to time become less or more identified with the subject, have not of themselves been factors of any grave importance as to the redemption of the subject; nor do I think that, for example, the careful work which has been done through so many years by the Psychical Research Society is itself sufficient to account for the altered inclination of the cultured mind of the age, though it cannot fail to have been one of the instruments. We must go back almost to the inception of the manifestations themselves for the roots of another movement which has to some extent taken spiritualism under a species of protection, and has made it possible, by the explanation which it has given of it, much in the same way that the hypnotism of Braid made it possible for the phenomena as apart from the explanation of animal magnetism, to appeal less unsuccessfully for recognition.

I do not think that any one who is capable of looking comprehensively at the whole matter, apart from all prejudgment, can fail to see that the other movement, if we must continually recur to this term, has more than anything been concerned in the change which of late years has passed over modern minds; and this is that movement commonly and rather imperfectly described as occultism, being the body of doctrine and practice which on previous occasions I have sought to distinguish from the principle, conduct, and term of the mystic life. By this I understand the idea that in certain centres of thought and of secret activity, there has been perpetuated from generation to generation a hidden knowledge, the external evidences of which have, however, been always in the world, more ostensibly existing at certain times and in certain places, more concealed and inappreciable in others, but there always. We are not concerned at the moment in ruling definitely on the extent or value of this alleged secret knowledge. The fact of its existence and perpetuation is sufficient. In the last resource there is no doubt that, from many points of view, its importance has been enhanced falsely by over-valuation on the part of those who have either recognised it under a glass of distortion, or have been in some sense its overt and, perhaps, professional supporters. However this may be, the knowledge in question, or the records and evidences thereof, to all appearance, fell asleep at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and could not be said to have awakened until after the Rochester knockings had been noised abroad in the world. There is nothing to lead us to suppose that this awakening was the result of those manifestations, and much less, as has already been mentioned, that the manifestations known as modern spiritualism were one of the devices originated by the secret sanctuaries as an experiment on the mind of the age. I recur again to this matter because it has been advanced by persons who have made, perhaps idly enough, some pretension to speak with knowledge thereupon. I think, personally, that the awakening of occultism occurred for much the same reason that spiritualism itself was propagated so quickly in several countries of the world, because the particular complexion of the time lent to each their opportunity.

It will be within the knowledge of all people who have to any extent concerned themselves in these subjects, that the movement of modern theosophy arose, so to speak, within the heart and centre of modern spiritualism, and that Madame Blavatsky, in one or another manner, must be identified as the creator of that movement. She herself, in the earlier years of her life, appears to have posed as a medium of the ordinary kind, and subsequently the peculiar claims which she advanced always recognised the existence and the genuineness of the phenomena, though the fundamental hypothesis of spiritualism, by which these phenomena were explained, she rejected definitely. That is to say, in place of the interference of the spirits of departed humanity, she recognised the old occult doctrine of elemental and elementary intelligences belonging to spheres of existence which are entirely apart from humanity. There is no doubt that this view has very largely modified opinion within the ranks of professed spiritualists. I do not propose at the moment to consider the value of the doctrine either in itself or as an explanation of the phenomena with which we are particularly concerned. It is in attempting to ascertain the sources from which she personally derived her view that we are taken back to the first reawakening of occultism in the nineteenth century; to the year 1850, and subsequently, as regards time; to France in respect of locality. It was then and there that the books of the Abbé A. L. Constant, more generally known as Éliphas Lévi, began to appear, and though they must be said to have attracted very slight attention at the moment, they are the root of the occult movement in Europe and America, as they are also one of the most important factors in the early history of theosophy itself. When this writer published his first works upon that which he termed transcendental magic, the phenomena of spiritualism can scarcely be said to have been known in France, but in his later books they were taken into account. It was he who first propounded the particular explanation concerning them which has since been identified with that of modern theosophy generally. He was before all things else a Kabalist, in the superficial sense of the description, and the system of Kabalism, in respect of the transcendental universe, left room for the return of the departed spirit to earth only under very peculiar and restricted circumstances. In accordance with the teaching of his masters, he was therefore compelled to look about him for an explanation of the occurrences which were referred to departed spirits; and he found this in the old-world doctrines of western magic. How far these doctrines borrowed more than a complexion from the Kabalah it is difficult to say, but the idea that spirits subsist in the universe outside those of human beings, of angels and demons, to some extent follows from the almost endless speculations of late commentators on the Zohar, since it is from them that we derive most of our knowledge concerning what the Kabalists term Kliphoth and Shells.

It is a little difficult to summarise within a small space the tradition which has thus been derived to us from Oriental and Spanish Jews, and it is more than difficult to put it into readily intelligible language. The literature of the Zohar and its cycle supposes the existence of many universes peopled by beings of different orders of intelligence and with varying capacities for good and evil. As regards those of the highest kind, they correspond, broadly speaking, to what is understood in Christian doctrine by the several choirs of the angels, together with the souls of the just which have become perfect. In their totality these form what the Kabalists symbolise as the Great Adam, the universality of created intelligences in communion with the divine powers; and there is no doubt that this symbolism was designed more especially for the glorification of Israel, because the Great Adam is in fact Jewry infinitely extended and all abiding under the law which was given to Israel, by which law the universe was itself formed. The antithesis of this symbolism is contained in the notion of Adam Belial, the synthesis of all those beings who are outside the Israel of God, including not only those that were understood as demons, evil angels, Liliths, and so forth, but also the souls of that vast proportion of humanity which has been, and still is, outside the obedience of the law. When the time came for Zoharic Kabalism to degenerate into merely magical literature, the outcome of magical practices, and when we thus have the so-called 'Keys of Solomon' and other rituals of evocation, we find that the objects with which these arts were practised were, to all intents and purposes, the communication with various orders of evil spirits which are included under this general hierarchy of Belial, always excepting the souls of the dead, whether or not they died in the peace of Israel, because, as I have already shown, magic in most of its branches had a reverential horror of interfering in any way with the departed of this particular world. I do not know that the Kabalah and its connections has at any time specifically considered the spontaneous apparitions of humanity after death, and it is quite certain that it has invented no explanatory doctrine concerning them. In consequence of the general feeling, we shall find that the older records of supernaturalism deal but sparingly in this particular subject. As I have also said, there was in the past little of that longing for reunion which is so characteristic a feature of modern sentiment in respect of the world which is unseen. Possibly the explanation may lie in the very clear distinctions which Christianity once made in reference to the destiny of the soul. That of the wicked man was of course relegated to perdition, and no person would seek to interfere with his punishment, much less desire to hold communion with him. The souls of imperfect beings dying, however, in what was understood, generally speaking, as a state of grace, went into the purgatorial fires for their ultimate cleansing, and this condition, having regard to its object, was much too sacred for those still upon earth to seek to intermeddle therein, otherwise than by the offices of prayer. Finally, the soul which was in heaven was naturally in an unapproachable state. It was otherwise entirely with all those orders of spirits which, in some manner that is not too readily explicable in the complex hypotheses of the Kabalah, became involved in that catastrophe which is popularly understood by the fall of man, though it was rather a cosmic calamity. From the magical standpoint it was more or less a lawful operation to evoke, compel, and control such beings for the purposes of man, and the designs pursued in the rites by which these practices were governed were invariably of a compulsory kind. At the same time, neither in the Kabalah nor its later corruptions were such natures invariably and exclusively evil; there were many intermediate orders, and among them those which, by the hypothesis, were more especially connected with the four elements supposed by old physics — the Salamanders who dwelt in fire, the Undines who dwelt in water, the Gnomes who dwelt in the earth, and the Sylphs or aerial spirits. The last are those principalities and powers of the air to which reference is made in the New Testament, and with which Lucifer seems at that time to have been more particularly connected, possibly by reason of the fact that he was at one period supposed to have been the Intelligence or Lord of the Morning Star. These beings are to be distinguished from what the Kabalah otherwise understood by the Kliphoth and the Shells, who may be fittingly described as the low-life deeps of the world of soul, the waste and drift of the higher forms of intelligence. They belong almost exclusively to the limbus of reflections and images, though they are not what some speculations of these days have endeavoured to understand and expound under the name of Collective Intelligences. To communicate with these beings was much as if a prince of this world, or a great artist or poet, should live among the wastrels of a tavern. It is not entirely certain that their condition was one outside amelioration; on this subject the tradition speaks much, with directness and indirectness, but never with any certain voice. They may be working upward by some age-long process out of the depths of their particular chaos, and in that case they are not in some mysterious way out of the sphere of God's providence. As much may be said for the lowest forms of life on the physical plane, including the living germs which propagate diseases in humanity, and from one point of view it will not be too much to say that the Kliphoth and Shells of Kabalism may, some of them at least, correspond to these and other scourges of the external world.

That all this is true in any literal sense will not be advanced at the present day, even by those who are committed to a belief in the occult sciences generally and to the traditions of the later Israel in particular. To assume so much would perhaps be no less indiscriminate than to accept without modification the explanation which spiritualism gives of itself. At the same time, when we come to consider the broad field of the phenomena, the literature to which it has given rise, and a very large part of the communications alleged to have been received through mediums from worlds of intelligence beyond us, some such hypothesis does not seem wholly dissonant with the facts. It is a matter upon which it is not a little difficult, and perhaps fortunately unnecessary, to advance any novel view. The old and fatal objections which have been raised in the past as regards the accepted explanation are still with us, and those who consider them unimportant are those only who by their own intellectual qualities can be least capable of speaking. We who realise, intellectually at least, the depths and heights of that world by which we are encompassed outwardly, and something of the height and the depth which are also within man, do assuredly know that the revelations of the unseen world which have come to us through spiritualism can have come only from the dregs and lees of the unseen, or, as I should prefer to put it, from the roots and the rudiments of that house which, however, on account of those rudiments, may not be less the House of God. It is stating by far too familiar a proposition to say that the communications and the messages recorded, in their aggregate, are little better than a chaos of disorder over which it would seem almost impossible that the divine fiat should go forth and affirm the light. It matters little to what extent the importance and the drift of those messages may have suffered alteration in the media through which they are transmitted. In the first place, it is gratuitous, as already seen, to suppose that questions of transcendental fact or doctrine are likely to undergo, for example, not merely modification but reversal; that the spirit should inspire from the other side of life the wisdom and the truth which are connected in our minds with that life, and that on this side it should issue from the lips of the medium, or through his hand in writing, as little better than the drift and refuse of the commonest world of thought. In the second place, if, despite its unlikelihood, such a theory is reasonably within toleration, then we shall do well to cease from methods of communication which result only in the distortion of the things that are unseen. As the poet says, 'the straight staff' may be 'bent in a pool,' but we are not asked to lean on the reflection. Outside this general difficulty, which is seemingly so insuperable because there is nothing in the field of spiritualism to show that it has ever been transcended, there is one which we owe to a certain dispassionate consideration within the Latin Church; and perhaps it is for this reason that it has not become current elsewhere. It has been well pointed out that though spiritualism has been termed a gospel of demonstrative faith, the whole of its evidence depends upon an implicit for which there is certainly no warrant in the general trend of the phenomena. It is a variation of the old vexed question of tests of identity, and it is advanced that the most crucial and apparently convincing test must be for ever without value, because in proportion as it seems perfect and irresistible it may be only the greater deception on the part of the communicating being, who remains unseen and in the last resource unaccountable. No one at the present day would desire to submit that a spiritualist who receives at a séance that which, so far as his knowledge extends, is satisfactory evidence that he is holding some kind of communication with, let us suppose, a departed relative, is in reality being imposed upon by the trickery of any satanic intelligence according to the conventional view; but it remains that he is assuming throughout the good faith of the other side of life, and that it is incapable of utilising particular means of knowledge in an unscrupulous way. It remains, also, that the demonstrative faith of spiritualism is perhaps the least demonstrated of all, because it fails upon its own claim, and, at the same time, it has not the interior warrants of transcendental faith. The more current difficulty, however, is the more insuperable to the ordinary mind, for whom the messages of spiritualism are in a worse position than the play of *Vortigern* in the Shakespeare forgeries, and in a position infinitely worse than the fraudulent reproductions of old masters which occasionally require the knowledge of a specialist to unmask them, whereas in this case they are effectually unmasked by a simple appeal to ordinary sense.

It does not follow that on account of these difficulties the séances of spiritualism have not placed their frequenters in occasional communication with the spirits of departed persons; in the vast asylums of the unseen there is no question that if there has been an universal survival of the souls of men, the basements, the cellars, and the dungeons of the house not made with hands must be crowded with beings whose capacities and dispositions would place them if possible a little lower than the shells and elementals of Jewish theosophists; but at the same time there is no satisfactory evidence to determine the point at issue. If the dead have spoken at any time since the beginning of the Rochester knockings, they have said nothing to arrest our attention or to warrant a continued communication; and this is true, not only of the common verbiage conveyed through illiterate channels, but of the best and most quoted examples within the whole domain of the literature. It is indeed open to question whether under some aspects 'the spirit teachings,' for example, obtained through the mediumship of the Rev. Stainton Moses are not, on the whole, more hopeless than the quality of the trance addresses delivered in a back street on a Saturday night before a circle of mechanics, for the simple reason that from the normal gifts of the medium we had fair warrant to look for better.

In view of this general position one is tempted to ask what will be the future of spiritualism. It depends upon the future, which awaits the attempted demonstration of occult science and the development of that more important line of activity and research which is understood by the term mysticism. If these are destined to become factors of importance during the present century, they will replace spiritualism, as the elementary text-book is replaced by the advanced text-book in the higher classes of a school. But if these movements and these interests are to die out, it is difficult to see that spiritualism has a future, for the limits of its possibilities are fixed in too rigid a manner, and it has shown itself unable to maintain the external phenomena by which it once attracted attention; its periodical literature at the present time sufficiently exhibits its condition of arrested development. It will not, in any case, have existed in vain, for if it has not clearly brought life and immortality to light, it has widened the horizon of humanity, and has proved that there are worlds within worlds in the things of intelligence as in things physical. I think, however, that it is more likely to be transformed than to pass away, and that in the further unfoldment of the spiritual side of our nature, we shall be led from the exploration of the roots, the foundations, of the house of the Father, and from those that dwell therein, to the halls and towers that are above, and to the more blessed companies that people them.

The general conclusion to be drawn from these papers is not to reject crassly the bare facts which for over half a century have been before the face of the whole world, in a manner which is unexampled to the world, or those anterior facts which seem almost coeval with humanity, but, at the same time, to appreciate them at their proper worth. And as a personal warning to each investigator who may be disposed to learn for himself, let it be said in conclusion that we shall do well to keep the doors of the soul shut until we can open them to God.

PART III

THE COURTS OF THE TEMPLE

THE GARDEN OF VENUS

AS a natural instinct of men compels them to seek association for the public interest in the open life of the community, so a deeper instinct prompts them to secret association in the midst of the general community for the attainment of some particular purpose or the advancement of some special interest. Both instincts are older than history, and, as regards secret association, it is common to every kind of civilisation and to almost every form of savagery. It is connected in particular with the history of religion, when it assumes invariably the form of a mystery which was worked by means of symbolism and conventional ceremony. In this way a peculiar knowledge was supposed always to be communicated to the initiate. In political societies, of course, the knowledge imparted regarded only the ambitions peculiar to the cabal and the methods concerted for their attainment. In those which were devoted to the pursuit of what was understood as science, an inherited experimental mystery was claimed to be imparted, and there is no doubt that more than one valuable process in the arts and crafts, at any rate, have been lost to the world because the sodality which possessed them has, in the course of time, ceased to exist. But the religious mystery has been always the most important and the most widely diffused. It is this that is assumed to have perpetuated the true doctrine which is veiled by the external dogmas and official systems of the great religions of the world. Societies claiming to connect with those of a high antiquity exist even at this day in many countries of Europe, and whether valuable or not, it is quite certain that they do perpetuate an exceedingly curious knowledge, remote, as it necessarily is, from the insistent material interests of the present age. At one or another time most people have come across something concerning them—some book which hints at their existence, some person who might have belonged to them. Speculation must have arisen as to the knowledge possessed and the objects proposed to themselves by the secret fraternities; and, their material preoccupations notwithstanding, such people will not be unwilling to learn something concerning the religious mystery, as apart from the political society. It is a difficult subject to approach from an external standpoint, but it involves nothing which will exceed the comprehension even of ordinary minds if they will put themselves for a moment in the position of any one among the thousands of individuals who, in the past or present, have set before themselves, as their chief end in life, the attainment of an assured knowledge concerning the soul, its nature, origin, and destination. It is claimed that such knowledge has been imparted in the past, and is still communicated in the present, by the secret religious orders to their initiates. History preserves the memorials of many institutions of this kind, but naturally some among them could not perform what they promised, and there were others which pursued paths of experiment that have been rightly regarded as dangerous. Whether any of them attained their end, whether that end is in any real sense possible at present to man, are questions which must be determined according to individual belief and predilection. To those who have passed in their experience beyond the regions which are open to the ordinary mind, there will be no need to say that a man's soul is not so wholly set apart in isolation from himself that he cannot enter into its sanctuary and learn something as to whence it came and whither it can direct its course. From such a standpoint I must, therefore, approach the subject of this paper, which concerns the nature of the teaching imparted by initiation, and the limits which must be assigned thereto.

The Mystic Saint-Martin said to the Theurgist Pasqually in a pause of the evocations: 'Master, is so much needed in order to find God?' And the Theurgist Pasqually replied to the Mystic Saint-Martin: 'We must needs be content with what we have.' It would seem to follow from this fragment of a discourse, addressed by initiate to initiate, that there are certain initiations at least which have their limits somewhat narrowly defined, and in particular that the theurgic doctrine and practice, as taught by an exponent whose processes are supposed to have been highly successful, left much to be desired in the mind of the disciple, while the want in question could not be furnished by the master. Perhaps in the last resource some answer equally unsatisfactory to burning and recurring questions of the same order might have been given by all masters of the mysteries who throughout the ages of the world have assumed to dispense a secret knowledge to their adepts by the mediation of signs, symbols, and sacramental ceremonies. In this case, it cannot be entirely that the fault has lain with the masters, because the great gifts are possible only to those prepared to receive them, and the fact that most people are unfitted for the truth is sufficiently exhibited by the further fact that they are without it. No one waits in vain for the spark from heaven to fall, since the spiritual mysteries of the whole stellar universe are ever ready to descend into the soul, if the soul be capable of bearing that light which they will enkindle within it. The way is always open; there is always a method of ascent and descent between superiors and inferiors, an instrument, a ladder of the soul; in a word, the soul has a *scala cœli.*

Saint-Martin, as we have seen, was desirous to know God, and when he first entered the secret order of his teacher Pasqually, it is probable that, after some undeclared manner, he imagined that his reception and advancement therein would conduce to this end. In such case, he did not understand in his youth what many at the present day fail to realise in their age, namely, that the external part of initiation is only the outer gate of the mystical experiment. The rites which at any period have been dispensed by the great confraternities are comparable to the formulæ of transmutation in the old books of alchemy—that is to say, they symbolise the process, but cannot, as rites, perform unaided the work of the process; nor, on the other hand, can the mere unprepared student, in either case, by a simple knowledge of the formulæ, attain the end of the experiment. At the same time, those who are acquainted with the spiritual processes followed by the old mystics will know that these processes are delineated, step by step, in the ceremonial of the great initiations, and though notwithstanding they offer, and that of necessity, only the substitutes of things that are incommunicable on the dramatic side of the mystery, and in the formal divulgation of verbal secrets, there is, at least by the hypothesis, a condition induced in the candidate by which, if he is otherwise prepared, he may enter the sphere of a real experience. The mystic, even as the poetic gift, cannot be dispensed by systems; but in both cases a certain training may develop a subsisting faculty. Most people who have followed out these subjects have begun by believing that initiation can help them, and this is true; but they have thought, or some of them, like Saint-Martin, that it could communicate the unveiled truth, and this was an exaggeration of their enthusiasm. The Temple of Initiation is in one sense that universe into which man enters, by the fact of his birth, that he may receive the lights of the universe. But, alike in the sanctuary and in the world, these lights are in themselves symbols and sacraments, albeit the instituted or artificial lights are nearer to the truth than those which have been set up as beacons in the natural order. The true design of initiation is, therefore, that of development; it cannot actually communicate gifts. If a man does not see that the formula of the Mass-Book, 'I will go up to the Altar of God,' contains the whole process, there is no hierophant on earth who will be able to open his eyes. At the same time there are so many initiable persons at the present day that the initiations are almost insufficient for them, and there are so many who have the gift latent that there is certainly a large field for every hierophant.

If we take in succession the chief initiating orders which have, within the historical period, existed in the various countries of the world, and if we attempt to summarise shortly the legitimate inferences concerning them, we shall find that, in spite of their variations, they have all in reality taught but one doctrine, and, in the midst of enormous diversities in matters of rite and ceremony, there has still prevailed among all one governing instruction, even as there is one end. The parables differ, but the morality is invariably the same. From grade to grade the candidate is led symbolically from an old into a new life. The archaic mysteries of Greece have been described as an introduction to a new existence ruled by reason and virtue, and to both these terms something much deeper and fuller than the conventional significance is attached. With this notion of a new life there is also unfailingly connected the corresponding idea of a return; in other words, the new life is really an old life restored to the initiate, who recovers, symbolically at least, that state of perfection and purity which he is supposed to have enjoyed originally as a spiritual being prior to what Greek mysticism regarded as the descent into generation. From this it is clear that the doctrine of all the mysteries is the doctrine of pre-existence, sometimes operating in the form of reincarnation, but more usually apart from specific teaching as to any mode of the metempsychosis. Those who are acquainted with some at least of the several orders which at the present day continue to dispense initiation, will know that this doctrine still prevails among them; the statement is true not only of the avowedly mystical fraternities, but of many others better known and far more widely diffused, though in the latter cases the teaching in question is not on the surface of the rituals, and many members of these bodies may pass through all grades and advancements without being aware of the real nature and the concealed significance of the particular community which they have entered.

At this point let me shortly define initiation; it is the selective and inherited intelligence of all the ages acting on the chaos of the processes, including those of the official religions, by which man has been offered a means of returning whence he came. In the course of that selection two chief lines of development have, I think, arisen. In the first class, the picture which is presented to the postulant in the successive grades of his progress is the operation of that universal law by which he was originally brought into natural life, and by which, under the providence of a peculiar guidance, he is taught how he must reascend and, in fine, return whence he came. The condition of the postulant's illumination is one in which the will has been directed to an act of obedience, and this stipulation corresponds symbolically with that imputed position of the candidate for participation in the lights of the mortal world, when he comes down, also by a voluntary act, to put on mortality and assume its law of obedience. In the second class, the opening stage in the scheme of initiation is the beginning of spiritual experience; the next is spiritual drought and dryness; and the third is expectation. For the mysteries are unlike the romances; these, for the most part, stop short at the marriage day, but those foreshadow that great knowledge by which the candidate may rise to an experience within the real order, namely, that of the mystic union and the indissoluble life which follows it.

I have mentioned the variety of symbolism and the variety of ceremonial in connection with the various orders and fraternities which have existed for the purposes of initiation throughout the ages, and I have said that, amidst these varieties, as regards all those that are important, the object has been one only. Amidst the cloud of diversities, and in conjunction with the recognised unity of object, there has been also a similarity of form which separately considered would be exceedingly curious. The grades of initiation are, of course, tabulated after many fashions, but, in the last resource, they are all reducible to three, with a fourth following very often, to outward appearance, as a species of supplement, while, as a matter of fact, this fourth grade is frequently the key of the whole. There is, in the first place, what may be termed, perhaps a little conventionally, the degree of birth, which is followed by the degree of inhibition; the third degree is that of a new life, and, finally, there is its sequel, typifying all that which may be supposed to follow from the experience of the new life. Those who are acquainted with the old processes so elaborately developed by the alchemists of the Middle Ages will know that the treatise of any individual alchemist may begin almost at any point in the work, and that if this point can be determined, the document in question immediately falls into line and order with the entire literature. The difficulty, however, is to identify the particular step at which the writer begins to deal with his process. It may be at the very inception of the work or at almost any later stage, and this has operated, as need hardly be said, very greatly to the confusion of students. In the same way, the various orders of initiation do not all begin their work of transmutation in the case of the candidate at the same point. It is in this way that the twofold division arises. There are some, and not of the oldest kind, which, within my knowledge, can be explained only by supposing that their first or neophyte degree represents really the prenatal life of the candidate, and they then take him through various stages up to the point of physical birth, the symbolical attainment of which already represents a high grade in the particular sequence; of course, in such cases, the point at which he reaches, let us say, the second birth, is one which, in the particular fraternities, is only attained when the candidate has successfully passed through a very severe school of selection. In other instances, and among them many of the more widely diffused and reputed schools of advancement, the entrance of the candidate within a particular order or fraternity of itself symbolises that he is passing from the natural to the transcendental world, and even as a neophyte he is supposed to receive what can be termed the Second Life of Nature. This being the case, it will be understood readily that the preliminary degrees of the other fraternities are not, in the last resource, of very great importance, and might, in fact, be almost ignored. Initiation, to all intents and purposes, begins only at the point when the candidate is offered, symbolically, at least, an escape from the life of earth—a touchstone for the distinction between things that are real and the universal illusion of Nature. It is, or it should be, always a degree, firstly, of purification and cleansing; secondly, of consecration; and, thirdly, of enlightenment.

And now let us take the scheme of initiation thus briefly unfolded and consider in which of two ways we are to regard it. Is it simply a sacramental experience which can be known only, let us say, by the perpetuation of a tradition, or, if one prefers to put it more crassly, as a dogmatic and religious invention? Or can initiation, alternatively, enable the candidate to pass, actually and psychologically, through the degrees of the experience which he undergoes dramatically in the presentation of the mystery? An answer to this question is exceedingly difficult, because, in the first place, there is no doubt that at the present day there exist many memorable survivals from the past which continue to present the spectacle, while the candidate, if he looked for that spectacle to be followed by any realisation, would be regarded as distracted. In a word, the hierophant, by whom he is supposed to be restored to light and to pass through the new birth, would be sometimes the last person in the world, and, indeed, in almost every case, to understand what was meant if transcendental knowledge were expected to follow therefrom. I do not at the moment particularise this section of the initiating fraternities, because they are too well known and too widely diffused to make such a reference necessary. On the other hand, those who can read between the lines of all that which the old writers have told us regarding the Greek mysteries in the days of their purity, know well enough that, by the hypothesis at least, a real knowledge was communicated to the epopt, and that he did come forth from the initiating temples as one who had participated in a sacrament which was not of this world. Unfortunately, with the lapse of the centuries, these mysteries, without being invariably profaned, seem to have passed into the position which the secret fraternities that I have mentioned occupy at the present day. There came a time when the true knowledge of the mysteries was apparently lost, and when that which was substituted for it was little short of a profanation of the mysteries. Whether, however, that secret had truly perished is a question which cannot be determined by simple scholarship. It can only be ascertained by the experience of those who, in modern days, have contrived to make contact with the secret orders which still exist and ostensibly perpetuate, at least in part, the traditions which have come down from antiquity. Now, it is needless to add that not one among such persons would feel themselves in a position to give more than an affirmative response. I mean to say that they cannot produce evidence on the subject in the open light.

As regards those initiations which obviously perpetuate rather the forms of a tradition than the tradition itself, and the outward vestures of the sacraments without the graces assumed to be conveyed therein, it might not unnaturally be thought that they serve no purpose and communicate nothing in reality. It must be admitted that in most instances their interest is rather of the historical or archæological order, and it would be sometimes difficult to account for the fact that it is this kind which is the most universally diffused. Still the relics are there, and it has been found that prepared students can, to a very considerable degree, reconstitute the lost elements, and without precisely restoring the life which has vanished therefrom, can indicate something of its quality. It must be remembered also that at no time can communication have taken place to the initiate except through the sacramental forms.

All men communicate with the world and with each other by means of sacraments and symbols, and though the history of what we term supernaturalism is a recurring and ever available witness to the impermanence of the sacramental ministry, it is by reason of the interpenetration of another world of sacraments. In other words, while there is a continual abrogation of that law of continuity which was once regarded as the sole guarantee of safety from intellectual confusion, it is not because the sacraments cease, but because there are many sacramental orders. So also, no hierarchic religion has ever subsisted without its bodies of types and allegories, much after the same way as the applied sciences have all their separate sequences of formulæ and signs which are unintelligible to the ignorant.

It depends upon each individual whether he will remain under the normal sacramental dispensation. If he would transcend it, he must enter that path which is called the path of adeptship by those who are still so far resting in the letter that they do not care to term it the path of the saints. But when he has trodden this way of asperity and joy he will still find that, in this life, there have been and there are in fact no naked mysteries. When the lost arcanum is restored, it is of necessity a word which to the uninitiated would convey nothing, nor would the bare fact of its communication within the mysteries of a particular fraternity signify necessarily anything of vital import to a member not otherwise prepared for the communication of real knowledge. The outer form is, so to speak, the form and body of the grace, independently of which the latter cannot be conveyed any more than the soul of a human being can function in the material world apart from the material body which is the means of communication with that world. This is only a more elaborate way of saying that all the great things of life are outside evidence and that their appeal, in the last resource, is scarcely to the logical understanding. The Word, to make use of one of the most widely spread forms of symbolism, is imparted to the adept at one or another period of his advancement, but its meaning is not imparted, except by secret communication between his own soul and the truth which is behind the symbol. There are, however—for it seems advisable to restate this point—preserved amongst some of the initiating fraternities those secret processes by which in the past the condition of adeptship was to some extent assured for those who, by natural or acquired gifts, were able to make use of the processes, and this is perhaps as much as can be said on the subject to those outside the brotherhoods. It is well known, however, and can be learned by any one from the literature of all the mystics—whether such processes were consciously followed out under definite instruction or were arrived at independently by the many mystics who have never passed through initiation—that they are all connected with what is termed the Interior Way, and that the attainment of that state in which it is possible for the transcendental truth to manifest to the individual man has been invariably by the way of contemplation—that is, of fixed interior reflection and the arrest of the insistent flow of communication from the outside world through the senses. Novalis was right when he said that the condition of knowledge is *Eudaimonia*—saintly calm of contemplation. Thus, the pillared gates of initiation symbolise in reality the entrance of our own souls. All the arcana are situated therein—the stars which influence us, the instruments by which we divine, and the keys of things intelligible. It is this paramount and catholic comprehensiveness which makes it impossible for us, in the last resource, to be taught, except by the spirit. In respect of material life, the soul is a receptacle of impressions and communications from without, but in respect of the spiritual life it is a conduit of the eternal graces. The state of communication from without through the material forms of perception is a state of inhibition. The only natural condition of the soul is that of cohabitation. These statements are the *loci communes*, the commonplaces of life eternal.

It seems desirable at this point to say a few words concerning all that has been regarded as the essential preliminaries of initiation, and I am using the expression altogether in an untechnical sense, because it applies equally to those who, even in the life of the world, but without any extrinsic assistance from orders or fraternities, have resolved within themselves to graduate for the mystic life, just as it would apply to one who might at this day find himself unexpectedly confronted with the opportunity of reception into some or other of the initiatory fraternities. I do not know that, in the last resource, these preliminaries can in any sense be said to exceed what is imposed upon almost every person who has placed himself under any form of spiritual direction; but it is desirable from the present point of view to interpret simply to ourselves the real meaning of the elementary processes: for this reason I shall, as far as possible, translate the rules of initiation into the corresponding terms of the simply devotional life. The initial processes are thus repentance—which is the rebaptism of the sinner—prayer, fasting, and works of charity. Prior to any initiation, the candidate from all time was required to undergo what the mysteries have termed the Rite of Lustration. The inward cleansing is not, of course, without the external, which is symbolical, by which I mean that the candidate passed through a symbolical baptism, the intention and significance of which was practically the same as is the Christian rite for every child of the present age. It corresponds also to the sacramental doctrine of penance. Perhaps at this day, and in the great churches, the baptismal rite, like others, is regarded as sacramentally and of itself communicating a grace and creating a condition in the recipient, which is foreign to the idea of initiation, because this did not, as I think, so much identify the sign with the thing signified as the churches are inclined to do. Perhaps alternatively, in both cases, when they come to be properly understood, there is a more common ground between them than appears at first sight. The act of will is, however, sacramentally exercised by the sponsors, on behalf of the child in baptism, but the candidate for initiation, though, in a sense, he has also sponsors, exercises it on his own behalf. In any case, so far as the mysteries are concerned, there was indisputably within the conception of their baptismal sacrament a very full realisation of the necessity for refining the physical senses, and herein lies the whole question of the balance between culture and asceticism. Both of these, in their exaggeration, have passed into excesses almost outside of reason. We have only at the present day to regard the prevalent idea of culture for the sake of culture, on the one hand, and, on the other, to compare it with the exaggerations of self-denial as practised by almost any saint in the later calendars of Christendom. As the culture of the present day, or, indeed, of Alexandria and the cities along the Mediterranean about the beginning of the Christian epoch, is, and was, mental and physical self-indulgence and self-worship in exaltation, so asceticism was self-denial and self-hatred exalted to the same state of frenzy. The refinement of the senses, typified by the rites of initiation, was the point of balance between these two extravagances. It exacted from the candidate a certain rule of life, which was to reduce the insistence of the senses and to combine the purity and singleness of intention required for all high purposes with a corresponding purity of body. In this way we come to understand why it was that, in some modified form, fasting was expected of the candidate. Initiation regarded the senses simply as a temporary and necessarily imperfect means of communication between the soul and the world, and it endeavoured, by the simplification of diet and other precautions, to cleanse the channels of the communication. It regarded this external world as sacramental in the nature of the evidence which it produces through the senses to the soul, and, I think, it held also, as the Churches hold at this day, the superior value of instituted over natural sacraments, just as, in common magic, natural sorcery is inferior to the instituted sorcery which proceeded by the obscure rites and ceremonies of olden time. It must be confessed that this notion contravenes very seriously nearly almost all the most cherished among the modern views of Nature, but it seems to me true, notwithstanding, that in the intellectual world most of the pleas for Nature have ultimately to be withdrawn. Difficult as it is to put forward, the sacramentalist may, I think, be recommended not to get too closely into touch with Nature, but rather to contemplate her as we contemplate a pageant from a distance. If I may be pardoned so palpable an illustration, the first row in the stalls too obviously exhibits the make-up necessary to the actors. The particular virtue of the ministry from Nature to the soul of man is not by any means to be denied, but it belongs to another and lesser order of experience; or, at the most, it must be said that very high gifts indeed are required to translate its messages into the more exalted terms of the understanding. All these ideas, though at first sight foreign to the subject, lie really within the notion of the candidate's physical purification, the object of which is to modify, and, as far as may be possible, to transfigure the appeal of things manifested through the senses, and thus to create within the recipient a new point of relationship towards that which is external to himself. Such purification, I need scarcely say, and such an altered standpoint are, in one or another degree, required of all persons who are elected to any spiritual life. Prayer also was imposed on the postulant, and it is equally necessary to understand the idea which underlay this part of the rule of his preparation. We are told that the prayer of the just man availeth much, and the reason is that it coincides with the law and the order. In other words, it is fulfilled and is an operating power because it lies wholly within the reason of things. The prayer which suspends that reason or is contrary to that law avails nothing, unless indeed as a disturbing element in the universal harmony. The mountains which are moved by supplication, even as by faith, are within us, not without us, and the kingdom and the bread which we ask for are not of this external world. It is indeed true in a sense—and as regards the nourishment of the supersensual life—that whatever man asks for outside the Eucharist is the sign of an emotion misplaced; but in this connection it is also true that the Eucharist is everywhere. It is as much in the starry heavens as in the bread of the altar.

In addition to fasting and prayer, on the candidate for spiritual advancement in the Christian schools, of whatever order and degree, was enjoined the works of charity, but that which it signified lies far without the common conception of good will and possesses its analogy with the mysteries. The secret was known to St. Paul, who indicates that it is possible to sell all that one has and give it to the poor, and yet be wanting in charity. There is, however, a way in which the process of denuding oneself may be made to profit us something, and that something signifies a great deal to the inward life. The secret is contained in the idea of the word detachment. It is impossible for our physical manhood to pass through material life dispossessed of everything, and the attempt so to dispossess our humanity is no part of the work of love; but detachment is that mental state which forbids the over-valuation of the things of life and, above all, of life itself, making the work of individual election and the object to be attained everything, but the environment or the circumstances under which we advance to attainment, of themselves nothing. It is in this sense that the law of charity passes from the region of good nature, and that alms can literally be given, or any other good work undertaken, for the love of God. I cannot add that in the ancient initiations such virtue is specifically indicated, but the gates of the spiritual life are not always the same gates, and the neophyte was assuredly instructed in the true spirit of detachment. As regards all these three rules of life, one recommendation may be made as a kind of *obiter dictum*, namely, that the occasional formal and external practice of each of these virtues, to maintain the sacramental communication with humanity, is a salutary, though in a sense trivial, instrument towards the higher progress.

Let us now recall for a moment the old theological doctrine of the fall of man, which, in one form or another, is common to all religions. By that fall, whatever its nature, man is supposed to have forfeited both his science and his perfection. The recovery of this perfection and of that science is the avowed object of mysticism. And it was also the end of the mysteries. In the Enclosure or Garden of Venus, Pausanias tells us, there was a subterranean method of descent which was natural and not to be removed, and to return by the same way was considered, in the transcendental philosophy, a possible and reasonable thing. It was an exceedingly narrow pathway, and the ascent was very nearly impossible, but to those who could take it the way was always open. This parable is reproduced in one form or another by nearly all the mysteries, as by a secret order of the garden. It is in this manner that mysticism is said by its opponents to repeat itself. It does as a fact go over the same ground continually in its literature, but it is the ground of experience, and hence the transcendentalism of the past is not merely of archæological importance, and its study is something more than a curious departure in literary research.

The legend to which I have alluded is, perhaps, the most profound and the most secret which has come down to us from antiquity, and it contains within itself a full demonstration of the positive knowledge of some of the old philosophies on the subject of the great mystery. The descent of the soul into matter is a mystery of generation. The ascent of the soul from the material is another mystery of generation. He who understands the secret of the sexes has the key of all things. Initiation claims to impart the knowledge of this way to prepared disciples. The quest, they will affirm, is as old as the fall itself, and the discovery antedates history. It is a traditional method which formed part of the elder wisdom, has never been wholly lost, and was perpetuated by the inner circles of all the ancient sanctuaries. Initiation, therefore, as an old writer tells us, is a transcendental process of return to 'that first pure and immaterial being whom truly to know and to be able to approach with purity is the highest pitch of perfection at which philosophy can arrive.' The traditional method of return to a state of primeval knowledge and the restoration of the lost perfection of the soul are known to the mysteries and the mystics under the name of the new birth. Even among the savages of Africa I have heard somewhere that there is a tradition of regeneration. What is this process so indefinable in its nature, so curiously, though so appropriately, named, and so inscrutable in its workings, as those who are acquainted with it affirm? Most, if not all, initiations involve the conception, as we have seen, of symbolic death and afterwards of symbolic resurrection, which is a birth into new life. This has been insisted upon in every age and experienced among all peoples. It is not, therefore, peculiar to one creed or to one ecclesiastical system. It is known to the Latin Church and to the followers of Calvin; it was experienced by Newman at the age of fifteen, and the author of *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* relates how he has witnessed it in its visible and physiological workings. It was divined by Plotinus, it was communicated by Christ, it was preached by St. John the Evangelist. It pervades the religious literature of Christendom, but it is not confined to Christianity. It was sought in the far past by means of ascetic processes throughout the oriental world; it has been sought also in the sacramental application of supernatural grace; and, finally, by the free, conscious, and determined self-direction of the interior nature towards the absolute standard of perfection. The change which it comprises has received many names, from the familiar conversion, which has suffered by the commonising effect of universal handling, to the high-sounding equivalent which we derive from the Greeks, namely, Palingenesis. It is a quickening, a manifestation, an unfoldment of a new quality of conscious life. It is, in some respects, what has been termed by German philosophy a new form of perception. The intellect begins in fact to discern the spiritual, and to have in consequence a new set of experiences which are not known to the unconverted. Before we can understand, even dimly, what is intended by the new life, we must, at least, have within us a distinct potentiality of regeneration, and this is what is meant by the statement, so continually met with, that initiation of itself cannot impart the faculties upon which alone its process is worked. For regeneration is the root and branch of the whole system of initiation, while at the same time the symbolism, the *mise en scène* of the mysteries, as for example the symbolic birth in the lunar ship, is only the drama of regeneration; it is not regeneration itself which may be shortly defined as the faculty of correspondence with the original fountain of experience.

At the present day the suggestion of scholarship is, I believe, that the old authors have not transmitted to us much actual knowledge concerning the ancient mysteries as they flourished, let us say, in Greece and the neighbouring countries. This is true for those who have not themselves entered, directly or indirectly, into the line of initiation, but otherwise it is scarcely true. In matters of detail we may undoubtedly have lost much, and even on other points we may well misconstrue something, but we are not entirely without the keys of the experience which was communicated in the sanctuaries, and this is the essential thing after all, though one which is naturally denied to modern scholarship, as such, and which modern scholarship, also as such, would be the foremost to reject if it were offered. Those who can go thither where their brethren travelled before them will not long be in doubt as to what has been reached by their brethren. But in proportion as they advance they carry with them an increasing imposition of secrecy, which is not so much instituted as natural, so that those who have made progress in experience without any formal initiation whatever are not less bound than the others. We find, accordingly, that Jacob Boehme, who had never, so far as we can ascertain, entered any of the mystical fraternities, expounds the greater mysteries in the terminology of profound concealment.

The object of the ancient mysteries has been described as an assimilation of the conscious being and his final contact with the object of rational inquiry, which is that identity whence, as a principle, we made our first descent. The mystic was conjoined to the divine nature by means of divine media. Proclus tells us that those who were initiated into the mysteries at first met with manifold and multiform gods, but having been admitted to the inner penetralia they found no inferior divinities, receiving the divine illumination and participating in the very substance of Deity. 'And so,' he continues, 'if the soul looks abroad, she beholds shadows and images of things, but returning into herself she unravels and beholds her own essence. At first she appears only to behold herself, but having penetrated further she discovers that which is called the mind, and again, still further advancing into the innermost sanctuary, she contemplates the divine substance, and this is the most excellent of all human acts, namely, in the silence and repose of the faculties of the soul to ascend upwards, even to divinity, to approach and to be joined closely with that which is ineffable and superior to all things. When come so high as the first principle the soul ends her journey and rests.' According to the *Suggestive Enquiry*, certain interior faculties require to be cleansed and made clear prior to the transcendental experiences. The actual agent, it tells us, must be sought in the magnetic trance. The ancient mysteries worked with the same material as the modern mesmerists, but they conducted their practice in pursuance of great established principles, by which they became cognisant partakers in the wisdom of true being. The soul by means of this practice came to know herself, not in part, but as a whole. She arrived at her desired end, and, participating in Deity, perceived and knew that the source of life was present. 'This is the introspection of Psellus—the vital spirit purified by wise manipulation became a mirror of the catholic reason of nature, and of that holy and sublime experience granted to man alone in the divine alliance.'

It is affirmed that by the lustration of the mysteries the soul became liberated and was passed into this supernal condition of being, the rites of purification being designed to restore the monarchy of reason therein. The reference intended is, of course, to the induction of an inward condition, sacramentally signified but not in reality produced by the rites to which reference is made. The descent of Avernus represented, but also symbolically, the terror which besieged the soul during its first period of liberation, a state through which the mystic must pass of necessity, but the entrance of which has ever been kept a secret from the world on account of the arduous nature of the reascent, and because of the spiritual captivity which is possible to the unprepared therein. After this experience of Hades, the aspirants were passed on by the hierophant to the immortal abodes of the blessed. Here again we must interpret sacramentally, if the reference is still intended to the performance of an external dramatic mystery, or, alternatively, if the soul of the candidate, entranced by the processes of the adepts, underwent this experience in the subjective state, in which case it would be only more profoundly sacramental. The lesser mysteries ended at the point just mentioned. According to the same symbolism, there intervened between the desire and its object what was termed the Stygian Lake and that mystical death in which the soul relinquishes for a period her material envelope. Thus, says the author on whom some of these remarks are based, but from whom I can scarcely be said to quote: The successive stages of initiation unroll before the eye of the mind till, in the vision of the light in Elysium, that eye, no longer looking from within outwardly, and beholding its object through the atmosphere of the natural life, becomes converted and raised; and an assimilation is established, as near as can be possible in consciousness, between the self-knowing and the self-known. Above this there was still another grade of advancement, which was that of intellection in Elysium wherein the archetypal image of universal nature is revealed. Finally, the souls of the initiated, having been made perfect and having passed through the whole progression of intelligible causes, were exalted to the contemplation of the Highest Unity, on which there followed translation, 'the intuition of that which is before all things, and is the final cause of all, which seeing is seen only, and understanding is understood by him who, after penetrating all centres, discovers himself finally in That which is the source of all, and passing from himself to That attains, by an ultimate and crowning transition, the whole end of his progress.' And this was the consummation of the mysteries, a consummation which, it will be seen, offers to the initiate the same experiences and the same end which have been contemplated by the Christian mystics of all ages. At what grade the sacramentalism of the external pageant gave place to the inward experience, following the entrancement of the adept, it would be difficult to indicate precisely. The essential point which calls for notice is, however, that at some stage thereof rite and ceremonial passed away, outwardly at least, and that which followed is what I have termed previously the secret of the sanctuaries, which, though obscured, has not been lost to the world. The terminology in which the transcendental experience has been now described must not, of course, be regarded as adequate in respect of that experience. We are dealing here with things which in their essence are of necessity inexpressible, and the only language which can at any time be used concerning them is a sacramental or mystery language. Neither intellectually nor spiritually at the present day can the mind rest satisfied with a delineation of the nature of its progress in the words of Greek mythology, however that mythology is exalted. If, on the other hand, we are going to translate the experience into the terms of Christian mystical theology, and make use for example of the wonderful words of St. Thomas when discoursing of the Beatific Vision, we shall still be far from the attainment of commensurate language; but in this respect we must adopt the words of Pasqually, to which I alluded at the beginning, and must needs be content with what we have. There is one other point: Those who are unversed in the literature, to say nothing of the first-hand experience, of the transcendental object will not unnaturally think that the identity of the subject is lost in this contact with the universal, and there is no doubt that the particular when merged in the catholic must lose much of what we ordinarily attach to the notion of self-consciousness. Nothing, however, is, as I conceive it, lost which is of real value to the individual, and the misapprehension is largely occasioned by the deficiency of language in an attempt to describe the absolute conditions of transcendence. We shall get much nearer to the truth by saying that normal consciousness is merged into higher consciousness in the Absolute, that—in the words of Scripture—we know all things in God and are united with all things in God, having, therefore, as regards ourselves, a more intimate self-consciousness, knowing even as we are known, or—to put it in the language of philosophy—we come, I think, to know ourselves by a direct act of the mind and not, as now, only by reflection.

In the old days the pageants of initiation must have surpassed, if that be possible, in their splendour the pontifical rituals of Rome, and even at this period, on the small scale of the secret sanctuaries, there are indubitably many moving ceremonies. No doubt also when the ancient mysteries, with such modifications as may be necessary in another age of the world, shall come to be restored therein, as will most certainly take place when a real pontiff of these mysteries shall once more rise up among us, we shall again see the desert of materialism blossom with sacramental roses. Here I shall be exonerated from supposing that the mysteries of Ceres will be restored *qua* Ceres, and the other pageants in like manner, nor do I mean exactly that any *Missa Pontifica* will be presented in the guise of the mysteries, but rather that the *Mysterium Fidei* will be set forth as a ground of experience. In the meantime, those who will may remember that, after the decay of the mysteries, when even the holy places of the elder world had sunk into utter corruption, and the second death was adored in the place of the life of life, there rose up the faith in the holy sacrifice of the Christian religion, and at this day the Mass Book of the Roman Church contains the entire pageant of initiation, albeit of another order, and, the fact notwithstanding that it is overlooked by the great body of worshippers, even as the presence of the sacraments in the rites of many initiations now diffused over the world, we have seen that it is possible for those who know to reconstruct the whole process out of the commonest missal in the kingdom.

Most of the modern initiations preserve some elements of those old mysteries in which the divine light was communicated at least sacramentally to the soul. They contain in their rites and their symbols the marks and seals of their origin, and aspirants who have passed through them will be aware that, under various veils and with various modifications, they communicate the same thing. It is therefore conceivable that such as among them are, comparatively speaking, of yesterday, are, or at least might be, no less efficient than some of the furthest past, so that antiquity in this respect is rather of historical than vital value. The initiate of the present age stands at the apex of a triangle from which the lines recede into the past; historically he can follow them a little way, but they are soon lost in obscurity. Possibly, at a later stage of his progress the communication of the same experience may place him in another relation with the early mysteries, but it is not likely to increase his historical knowledge. Many of the initiations, both new and old, have, no doubt, to some extent missed their way, and assuredly, if some of modern times had given the same earnestness to the higher quests which they have devoted to the lesser paths of inquiry, they might have more fully attained their end. Perhaps, in the last resource, it is an open question whether persons who are most fitted by their natural gifts, or by the inward disposition of their mind, to undertake the experiment of adeptship, have, in reality, much need nowadays for the sacramental part, at least, of the experience of initiation. I do not suggest that secret processes are really to be found in books. In the first place, the great mystics were not to any marked extent either good writers or earnest readers, nor were they possibly, in the majority of cases, frequenters of assemblies. When they founded orders and sodalities it was to establish a concurrent rule of life rather than to create or perpetuate a secret tradition. Among the Christian mystics I think it may be said that most of them were as naked of all formal process as when they came into this world, and their books are helpful now only in the sense that a spade helps the soil, though it is not a principle of fertility; in other words, books are great creators of opportunity, but nothing beyond. I believe that for the prepared mind more is to be gained by the study of mystic symbolism, in which we find everywhere a disguised humanity, for there is but one vase and one matter, as there is only one proper study and only one subject which has ever really engrossed the mind of all true men. It is, therefore, the positive and absolute subject, and under all outward illusion, and beneath all external phenomena, the absolute is to be sought within. Here in this material age, amidst the modern interests, it seems nearly impossible to speak of these high pursuits. They sound somewhat fantastic, as if a man should set forth to find Avalon in the West Country or the Enchanted City of Hud. It is, however, with the antithesis of such an enterprise that we are really concerned here. Those who believe that they can get nearer to wisdom by varying their position on the map are pursuing a distracted quest. Silesia and Nuremberg, Rome, Egypt, or Lhassa are no nearer to wisdom than London. The wise man therefore travels only in his youth, because Egypt is also within.

It will not be unbecoming at this point to say something, somewhat guardedly, concerning the process and its end, and as to this I shall offer nothing new or complex. The life of sacramentalism is the life of sorcery, in which man is sustained, developed, and advanced under the terms of enchantment. He is given, for example, a white stone, and is told that it is the bread of angels; and he receives it as angels' bread. He is given the natural pageantry of a highly coloured world, full of tincture and tinsel, and he is told that it is reality; he has accepted it as reality accordingly for many myriads of years; and finally, since the sphere of ritual is also a sphere of sorcery, when he comes to be initiated, he is given the great name Abracadabra, with the secret variants and substitutes thereof, and is told that it is the true word. But there is one secret which the natural world has heard of dimly and far away, which the Church tolerates, which to the initiates is known. It is termed ecstasy, and in that term there is concealed the elements of the true process. It has been spoken of also by the first-hand experimentalists as rapture, and even as translation. It is the state in which God is said to have taken Enoch and Elias. The induction of this condition is performed after more than one manner, which is equivalent to saying that the condition has many substitutes; there is a way of reason and a way that is below reason. We can put the external world aside from the gates of the senses by artificial means. With this object the lesser rites had recourse to music and dancing and the utterance of barbaric words, which assisted to entrance the senses, producing a partial and inferior ecstasy which carried its penalties with it. But we can put away the world and its inducements by means of the life of detachment already mentioned, which, it must be understood, differs from the old life of the ascetic and consists almost wholly in the cultivation of a particular intellectual state characterised by fixity of thought. It has for its object reversion, reduction, simplification; in a word, it seeks to unify. With what the process unifies or to what it reverts the soul, we have seen already. I have had recourse to the Greek initiations, because they are more readily intelligible. Those who are acquainted with the mysteries as they were developed in Egypt can check the formulæ by what they know of Egyptian processes, and there are others who can tell us that the same voices have testified in India, that the same seers have everywhere beheld the same star in the East and have come everywhere to adore Him who is to come. The end of the process is assuredly sanctification. It is something more than the occult aphorism — *Vel sanctum invenit, vel sanctum facit.* The call of the adept is a peculiar call to sanctity. This being so, we have to inquire in what manner the means of sanctification in the mysteries can be said to differ from or to improve upon the means of the Church. The answer is that they do not in reality differ, and that the Church has all the means. Adeptship may be shortly described as the condition of a secret conclave within the universal church. The adept possesses a peculiar illumination which is not dispensed to or needed by the ordinary faithful. It concerns the vitality of religion behind the externals of dogma. The modern world has been unconsciously growing towards a wider scheme of initiation. It has, in a certain sense, outgrown the old religions, and is not yet in a condition to return to them, bringing life and immortality to transfigure them. An exhibition of the truth which is behind them is the present need of the age, and this initiation can supply.

The secret doctrine of the union, with which we are dealing here, is foreshadowed by all its rites. Let no one say that the transcendental consciousness of such union is an insufficient object of the soul because so small a part of it is translatable into the terms of human experience. It is, however, an experience of the beatitude of knowledge rather than of knowledge itself. At this point we may pause for a moment and consider what precisely is involved in the idea of union with God. If we accept the philosophical doctrine of immanence, that union in a sense exists always. At the same time, immanence co-exists with transcendence, without which it would be difficult to understand how the inhibition of supernal grace would at any time be possible in the soul. Such inhibition not only exists, but in varying degrees and proportions is palpably the normal condition of the great majority of the human race. It is not, of course, absolute, and indeed absolute inhibition is a notion which can scarcely co-exist with the idea of the dependence of the creature on its Creator, so that in the state of final reprobation—if that state really exists—there must be still such a connection between God and the soul as may be involved in the idea of the soul's continuance. But, in the light of our knowledge of God, the fact of continuance suggests that reprobation is never final. In all other respects it is to be believed that the grace of life is a continual manifestation of God within the soul of every individual man, and, therefore, to that extent there is, by natural law, a certain natural or elementary condition of union between God and the soul. The eternal life is only an analogical extension of the process by which we breathe and eat. The mystic state of union is the road of the natural extension and exaltation of this necessary fact, and the soul's nature makes it in reality more easy to pass upward by such a road than to descend into the uttermost depths of reprobation. The divine union is God resident in the consciousness. The progress towards divine union is, in the first instance, the realisation of our dependence on God and the importance of the relations which subsist between the Creator and the creature. This is the gateway of moral law, except through which it is impossible to enter this road, and which yet is nothing more than the gate.

The second stage is the direction of the will and is the consequence or extension of the first. One attempt to reduce mysticism to a fundamental system tells us that the integration of good wills in the Absolute is, in fact, the mystic city. If we cannot in this life aspire to penetrate the centre, it is possible for each one of us to be joined with its operation by the transfiguration of motives and the redirection of the will. The third state may be characterised as that of supreme desire largely founded on fore-knowledge, because he that serves the law shall live by the law, and he that lives the life may know of the doctrine, while the will to fulfil the law and live the life, long before its fruition, kindles the hint of the doctrine, so that the desire for the house of the doctrine begins to eat up the heart. It is after these three preliminary stages that the soul passes the threshold and so enters upon the degrees of real experience, which are or may be imparted by revelation in symbols through the instruction of initiation, and are thus suggested to the prepared heart; or the heart, independently of initiation, suggests them to itself, and is thus its own initiator. The advance in union with God is the advance in goodness, as understood outside of morality. Mystic experience may be briefly defined as the comprehension of the Absolute by means of vivid intuition. The mystic comprehension is present in the life of the mind by the permanent light of the intuition in the lower conditions of its comprehension, and is actually that certitude assured to all devout people in a lesser or greater degree, and by which they are enabled to affirm that they know the existence of God; that the soul never dies; and that the graces of the supernatural order are communicated to the soul of man. There is also, in the higher state, a suffusion of the intuitive knowledge and a remaining over in the logical understanding, which leave in the physical memory a recollection of ecstasy and of the things which, according to St. Paul, it is not lawful—that is, within the limits of the law, or, in other words, which it is impossible for man to utter.

In contrast with the attainment of the adept, let us show the traditional notion of the magus, since a distinction requires to be made between the transcendental end of the mysteries and the objects which have been set before themselves by the various occult and theurgic orders. The magus, let us say, is able to command spirits; he can transmute metals, he understands the course of the stars and predicts things to come; at his will he confers or withholds visions; he can prolong his physical life and that of others; he exhibits, on occasion, a profound and particular knowledge, besides a prodigious passing acquaintance with a vast circle of subjects; he possesses a magnetic personality; he controls the hearts of women and is not, at least usually, controlled by them; he is an admirable character in romance and produces vivid sensations in the impressive rôle of a man of mystery; he is at once Manfred, Melmoth, and Zanoni, with a suggestion of the Castle of Udolpho in the background of his picture. I am not going to discuss the question of possibility, to argue seriously that such a conception can belong only to the realm of fiction; that proficiency in alchemy is attained hardly in a lifetime; that the student of the stars turns grey over his work; and that, outside the possession of the quintessence, there is not time enough for one person to be all these things. But if they are all possible of attainment within the sphere of a single life, they are not the highest ground, and their pursuit carries not peace, but a sword, into the soul which is ambitious of such attainments. However, it is meted to every one according to his desire; and those who seek the initiations which confer these dignities and advantages need not be wholly disappointed. I think, all the same, that there is a higher sense of even these pursuits, and that he who understands them materially does, in most cases, make a grave mistake from the beginning. Certainly, in their literal sense, evocation, magic, spiritism, divination, the government of stellar influences are only curious arts, and they never lead man into holiness. If we are going to make anything of the fair world of the mysteries, we must love the highest object therein. It is our duty, indeed, as mystics to love the highest. For the rest, there is a certain solidarity and kinship between all forms of transcendentalism, whatever the variety of the circumstances. The common palmist is toying with the same faculty which, under another training and with another motive, might approach her towards the Beatific Vision, for the simple reason that seeing is seeing in things psychic as in things physical. But the palmist, because she is a palmist, is so much the further from that vision. And in another order of experience the adept who projects, as it is said, his psychic body, is doing much the same thing as used to be done daily by many materialising mediums, but the medium, because he is a medium, is so much the further from adeptship.

I have now reached the extreme limits of this particular inquiry. I have endeavoured to put its points temperately, and I have also aimed at clearness, though, perhaps, in the last resource, we have said little in favour of any statement by affirming that it is commonly apprehensible. Truth itself is apprehensible with difficulty. I cannot hope that I have succeeded entirely, at least in respect of clearness. After every will has been exercised to give expression to such conceptions as I have sought to convey, they remain, from their nature, obscure as regards their essence. The great secrets are ever the great secrets, and mystery issues into mystery. We can realise enough, however, to be aware that although certain experiences are essentially incommunicable, they are within the horizon of the soul, and that it is possible to say something concerning them after a sacramental manner. It is possible also for those, and they remain in the great majority, who are not likely to participate in such experiences during their material life, to attain an intellectual conception of them in the normal consciousness, if it be only sufficient to say that the mystics have dreamed a great philosophy which is large enough for heaven and earth. Such things, however, being matters of experience, are to some extent outside the region which is covered by faith, and there is, indeed, not much opportunity among the great things for the mere zealot or believer. It is to be regretted that the history of initiation has, for the most part, been treated sympathetically only by incompetent persons and has been treated competently, so far as scholarship is concerned, only by unsympathetic persons. In many of the historical inquiries the circumference has been taken for the centre, and, at most, the historical aspect of initiation has been occasionally dealt with soberly and carefully, but never with particular illumination or discernible gifts of sight. Fortunately, there is more in initiation than its external history, and its legends are truer than its history, for they are the product of its sub-surface consciousness. Withal, there is nothing which moves us like initiations and the rumours of initiations, and I suppose that if I who write and those who read should get tidings of Christian Rosy Cross to-morrow in Nuremberg, in Silesia, or in some remote castle of Cracovia, we should take it as a great sign, and should go. Let me not, however, end with words of my own, but in those of a profound writer, who has been insufficiently recognised because of the peculiar difficulties of his terminology, and let me say with him that 'the absolute eludes the consciousness,' perhaps even in the last resource, 'but the good fills it completely. We have only to love it, and the truth of Pascal's sentence is realised: God known of the heart.' The love of goodness is the first experience of the natural man, and all spiritual advancement is an extension of the soul's journey through its great distances. It is the end and the rest. Within that idea of goodness realised in the lower mind, we must perhaps be content, most of us, to restrict the limits of our progress for the moment of this life. Perhaps, after all, it is not so difficult to be good.

THE GATE AND THE SANCTUARY

EVERY man of imagination and every spiritual aspirant has been conscious some time in his experience of a divine passion for rites. It may have drawn him to the elaborate ceremonials of one or other of the great Christian churches, or it may have taken him to those secret societies which, amidst strange solemnities and immemorial symbolism, hand on from age to age in almost every country the moving traditions of initiation. Sometimes the rites may have lost their meaning, sometimes only a trivial significance is attached to striking ceremonies; occasionally the great sign can scarcely be said to signify. But the outward pageant draws the man of desire, much as he may regret the hollowness within it of which he is conscious in his heart. There are, however, orders in which symbolical ceremonies are married to great objects. It is difficult to enter these, it is difficult even to hear of them, and it may be added that some also may enter them without attaining their term. We must take into the mysteries of initiation nearly all that we desire of initiation, or that all must at least be latent within us. Most of the secret societies, like the churches, are, for various reasons, in a condition not precisely of decadence, but of something which, for the world at large, approaches arrested ministry; it is possible, at the same time, for the prepared neophyte to find what he wants in the one as it is for any devout person to receive a true leading and communication of supernatural grace in the other. Of course, in the last resource, the outward sign is always, and of necessity, insufficient, and it is apt to become worn by usage, but this disability is shared in common with all the external economy and for the same reason.

Throughout the centuries the great fathers and teachers of the Church Mystic have sounded in the ears of their disciples the doctrine of the insufficiency of outward things, but at the same time they have recognised, nor has any school of thought more strongly insisted on, the symbolical importance of all that by which we are encompassed externally. The Church Mystic is made up of numerous confraternities, to each of which there is assigned, or by each has been created, a certain characteristic tissue of symbolism, wherein their peculiar instruction has received an outward shape and vesture. In this manner we have the symbolism of doctrine, which is delivered always, because it can be delivered only, by way of economy or approximation; we have also the symbolism of the literary forms assumed by mystic thought, and in the schools of Christian mysticism some of these have been elaborated to an extraordinary degree; we have, moreover, the symbolism of rite and ceremony; and there are other veils and emblazonments which will occur to the reader. The truth is that ideas in the absolute order are conceived only by representation, which is the mode of symbols and sacraments. There is in the soul of man an undoubted desire to over-reach this ministry of representation and to obtain an immediate experience, and it is in this sense that man and his true interpreters, the mystics, are conscious of the inadequacy of the several external orders—as, for example, the church and the world, by which man is initiated and advanced, till the time comes for his translation from the symbolic death of this material life, out of the lesser mysteries into the grand mysteries of the Ineffable Degree. But the great teachers who are immortal are not for that reason infallible, and their lessons of insufficiency have more often than not been drawn from a sense of the methusis and aberration which outward things produce in humanity at large, because humanity has, for want of any proper criterion, accepted their ministry indiscriminately. The awakening of the sense of symbolism is the first awakening from this state of intoxication, and the initial gift which it bestows upon the things without is the hint of a great significance, behind which, indeed, there is almost an infinite diversity, an unmeasured depth and wealth, which to the poet are the source of inspiration, to the seer the spring of prophecy, to the mystic the great font of correspondences by which he forges the strong chains of union binding all worlds together. There is therefore no ground for the insufficiency of external objects as regards the ministry of their symbolism, but the chaotic ministry to undiscerning and simple sense is, of course, inadequate, and, as already said, there is a grade in which the mind can no longer be contented with its representations. Whether there is any field for the satisfaction of the desire which is thus awakened, only the mystic can tell us, but it accounts for the supreme sadness, apart from all passions of the mind, which in fine settles down upon thought in the highest places, striving after that Infinite which eludes us. In either case, there can be no doubt that the chief concern of mysticism is to satisfy the hunger and thirst after righteousness which is awakened under the proper ministry of symbolism, the term righteousness being taken in its true sense as the direction of the whole man towards the absolute goodness, thus differing widely from the common acceptations which connect it with standards of morality less or more conventional, the prescripts of social decency, or conformity with the ceremonial requirements of the several systems of religious belief. These things are also sacramental, but until their service has been accepted discriminately they can signify very little to the life of the soul.

Our considerations so far are those which are universal in application, but if we descend to things particular we must be prepared to find that some instituted systems of symbolism, however discriminated, are insufficient, some signs have ceased to signify, some modes of representation are vain and trivial. We cannot, for example, attach importance, as aids towards righteousness, to mysteries founded on mythologies, the dispensations of which have passed away, or to systems of ceremonial designed to inculcate things which are already generally admitted, and are obvious or elementary in their nature, or which can be taught better by a direct method. The institutes of ordinary good citizenship, for instance, are an improper object for symbolism, and a sacramental institution, a dramatic mystery, a mode of ceremonial initiation, which exist simply to inculcate such institutes, or to lay special stress on altruism, the higher immunities, and the admitted bonds of our humanity, or even the abstract notion of truth and the doctrines of imprescriptible right, by recourse to the veils of allegory and the illustrations of symbolism, mobilise too great a force to accomplish too simple a purpose, as from our earliest childhood we have been taught these things more naturally, more directly, and hence better, by the catechisms of all the churches. Further, it does not appear that the more cumbrous method more surely conduces to the end. To teach duties which are transparent to every one by the help of very complex machinery does not do outrage to the good sense of many and perhaps the majority of persons, as the general mind of the world is only just emerging from the ethical period, both in literature and art; but the story with a moral, the picture which reads a homily, the poem which furnishes a good example, are, ultimately, no less ridiculous than the seven or ninety and seven grades of a system which boasts as its solid foundation the practice of the several conventions which make political association possible. I am not minimising these conventions or denying the need to respect them, but I affirm that, having been advanced, consecrated, translated, transfigured, and having attained the other titles which confer the imputed stature of the adepts, there must be a sense of disparity in learning that the last secrets are like the first secrets, those which were known beforehand or implied from the beginning.

It is not therefore surprising that many thoughtful persons who are members of the various occult associations which inculcate civil conventions in symbolism, or, in other words, the obvious by the not obvious, should confess, secretly or otherwise, to a consciousness of their insufficiency. When describing this insufficiency recourse has been had to no special terminology of the secret orders, and the charge itself may apply least where it may be supposed to obtain most, while the associations to which it would actually apply are too numerous to warrant the selection of one only for criticism at this particular stage. Secret societies existing for ends which are specifically permissible are numerous at the present day, and, though independent of each other, they can be classed in definite groups. Some which appear at first sight as merely cosmopolitan or practical, indicate in their symbols, their successive ceremonies, and their concealed legends that they were designed originally to convey other subjects of instruction. The sacramental edifice in these cases seems to be like the 'columns left apart of a temple once complete.' It is an excellent and incontrovertible truth that the content is less than the container, but a story illustrating this elementary fact of natural possibility belongs to the region of *trivia*; the admitted social conventions are also excellent and incontestable, but they do not lend themselves to symbolism; and if we find in the symbolism of some among the secret orders much which is unexplainable by elementary knowledge or by the common maxims of jurisprudence, we have the right to look further than that knowledge or those maxims; and any student of the subject will frequently be justified at once by the haunting sense that throughout the impressive rituals there are certain elements which are not modern, there are certain affiliations and allusions which take us back through all the Christian centuries, even to Eleusis and to Egypt. The mystery surrounding such elements frequently constitutes in these days the only real secret remaining to a particular order, except, indeed, the rise and origin of its corporate union; but this is another aspect of the same mystery. It is, therefore, true to say that the real secret is not taught in the sanctuaries or assemblies of the adepts, or in any manner communicated to initiates, but is discovered, if it is ever discovered, by the initiate for himself, and that this being so the adepts in occult orders are exceedingly few, that is, those who are admitted to the adyta, though the postulants at the threshold are innumerable.

From this point of view let us glance as briefly as possible at the universal symbols and the root legends which are common to all systems of initiation; I speak only of those which by a certain doctrine and practice claim to lead man in the direction of his proper end. It is possible from these, by the faculty of careful selection, to recover that which will restore to occult association the principle of sufficiency which seems wanting to its outward aspect. It must be realised in the first instance that the place of initiation is a sanctuary, and to know the meaning and intention of initiation it is necessary that the sanctuary should be entered. Now, we can enter it only by the gate. This gate is always the same, and the sanctuary is also the same. In different orders of initiation it is symbolised differently, but there is invariably an outward sign which signifies the inward fact that the postulant is passing a threshold, and that beyond this threshold he enters upon a world of knowledge from which he is otherwise debarred. The difficulties of entrance vary with the rites, but the difficulties always exist; the conventions of their removal vary, but the conventions also exist. A certain preparation is requisite on the part of the candidate which constitutes the spirit of his entrance; the details of the preparation differ, but the spirit is always the same, for, by the hypothesis, he enters always upon that which is holy ground, and in one or another way he is required to put off the common habits of earth and to make ready for a new life. To understand adequately the meaning of this symbolical departure from the things that have gone before him in his past to the things that await him in his future, is to make the first step towards a knowledge of the true secret of initiation. Let us consider, therefore, who it is that enters, what are the conditions of his reception, and by whom he is received. It is, speaking broadly, the natural man, the man as we find him on earth, perfect in his own degree, according to the lights of humanity, mentally and physically complete, justified also morally, since otherwise he would be unfit for reception, but incomplete in the absolute order and seeking initiation that he may super-add something to himself. The manner of his entrance is that which is proper to the postulant praying for gifts to which he confesses that he cannot advance any actual claim, and to illustrate this position he sometimes permits himself to be denuded of the conventional dignities which attach to his particular place or grade in external society. Those who receive him, by the hypothesis at least, are those who can confer upon him that which he does not possess, and of the want of which he is conscious. They therefore stand, as regards himself, in a superior degree; they are something more by their office than the natural man, and that in which they differ from himself is also something which under proper conditions they can dispense to him, or otherwise all initiation is merely a show that shows, or, more properly, a clouded pageant.

While it is easy to realise this, it is almost beyond the simple sense of criticism to infer certainly in what specific respect the initiator differs from the initiated. I am speaking still, and of necessity, from the symbolical standpoint. In the last resource, he that gives may be less than he who receives, but not in respect of his office, and it is, therefore, the significance of this office into which we must next inquire. I have said that some kind of initiation is to be found in almost every country of the world; like the tradition of regeneration mentioned in a previous study, it exists in the wilds of Africa as it does among the old civilisations of India and the furthest East; and the fact that it is possible to write with knowledge upon the subject at this time and in the present place, is evidence that initiations also exist at this day in the western world, not even excluding England. We may glean some light upon the subject if we can point to any body of written tradition as to a general source from which the systems of the West have presumably derived a part at least of their knowledge. Now, such a written tradition is actually to be found in Kabalism, that is to say, in the esoteric literature of the Jews which has grown up during the Christian centuries. Criticism has left these documents still in a doubtful condition, but it cannot well be denied that from various sources, and chiefly from Egypt and Assyria, the remanents of a secret doctrine have been collected into them. The mind of Israel has been always the mind of the mysteries, and the secret of Israel is at least to some extent the secret of initiation. It is for this reason, as I think, that Jewry produced Christianity, even as the city of this world is the material of the Mystic City. There is a sense in which the drama of initiation is the drama of the gospels. If we take in succession the symbolical stages through which the candidate for initiation advances in the course of his progress, we shall find our chief light concerning them derivable from Kabalistic literature, and especially from that book which is known to students under the name of the Zohar, together with its supplements and dependencies. Unfortunately, the work in question is written in a jargon which is so barbarous that its sense is seriously obscured and has sometimes been scarcely believed to exist. An explanation sufficient for our purpose can, however, be given in a few words. The Kabalistic system of philosophy suggests four worlds, those of pure Deity, of formation, of creation, and of things material and infra-material. Each of these worlds is supposed to have been produced by the extension of ten modes emanated successively. These modes are mentally and conventionally represented in three columns—that on the right being termed the column of Mercy, on the left the column of Severity, and in the centre the column of Benignity. The sanctuary of all initiation is in the centre, and the passage through that centre leads to the Supreme Crown of Kabalism, which is, in fact, the world of Deity. Through these columns, as through the gates leading to the sanctuary, the soul is supposed to pass till it reaches the divine end. But that which returns to the Divine is that also which in the first place came forth from the Divine, as the idea of emanation assumes, and the system suggests that the divine and intellectual principles which constitute the complete man descended or were evolved through the pillar of Mercy, to be manifested at the end of the emanation in that which is termed the Kingdom, which is this present external world. Through the left-hand column of Severity the written and oral law, otherwise the Scriptures of the Jews, together with their secret explanation, is supposed in its turn to have been evolved, and thus ultimately manifested on this earth. The redemption of humanity takes place through the pillar of Mercy, signifying that the soul enters into salvation at the end of its evolutions through the various worlds. In this manner the gate of initiation, as interpreted by the mind of Israel, signifies the mystery, firstly, of man's origin, and, secondly, of his return whence he came.

The true method of that return is and can be the only field of research which is covered by the mysteries. The history of the human soul, its origin, its transmigrations, and its destiny, the secret doctrine concerned paramountly therewith, will offer, to those who can tolerate such investigations, a view of the purposes of initiation which removes that sense of insufficiency which in some orders and fraternities has been from time to time awakened by its imputed purpose. I do not suggest that initiations which exist at this time in the western world are to be identified with Kabalism; crudities of this kind are offences of a bygone day; but having regard to the sources from which Jewish theosophy was derived, as well as to its literary history, it seems certain that it transmitted something to the secret societies, and as regards those which are later in time, it is not less certain that the men who elaborated their rituals had some personal knowledge, at least, of the wisdom treasured in Jewry outside the law and the prophets.

From the gates of the sanctuary let us pass now, in our contemplation, to the sanctuary itself, and let us remember, in the first place, that the Kabalists were builders in imagination of a city not made with hands, of a heavenly or spiritual Zion, and of a Sanctuary or Holy Place within the walls of this city of which the sacred house of the King in the earthly Jerusalem was but an imperfect external sign. The world for the Kabalists was full of palaces and sanctuaries, and visible creation—in particular this lower world—the sphere of the Kingdom—was viewed as the House of Adonai, the abode of the Indwelling Glory. It will be seen how readily this conception lent itself to the institution of multitudinous analogies in the fervid mind of Jewry; how the outward sanctuary was transfigured by many meanings, so that it was now the body of man enlightened by the indwelling spirit, which was also the understanding of the law, and now the spiritual Jerusalem; how the destruction of the outward city signified the secret doctrine laid waste by the advocates of the letter, or, again, the chosen nation, the peculiar people delivered into the hands of the idolaters; and finally—if we may for a moment plunge more deeply in the complexities of the Kabalistic system—how the external city and its holy places were symbols of the primal world before the serpent had ascended into the Tree of Life; how their destruction typifies the Fall; how the later city stands for the restored world of Kabalism, which differs from the first in glory; and how in fine there is another city which is to come, over which there shall be a new firmament. It is this city which the Kabalist always rebuilds in his heart, and as I know that this splendid spectrum, like the bow of promise, rests over all the later literature of Israel, and over the dreams of all the palaces, I must be permitted to register an inward conviction that here also something has been derived by the occult associations from those spiritual enthusiasts of the greater exile. I know that long after the golden age of Kabalism, yet far earlier than the earliest date which we can assign to any extant rituals of initiation now worked among us, the Rosicrucian fraternity also symbolised a sacred city and house not made with hands; while at the very period when the wonder and the rumour of the Zohar, or chief work of Kabalism, first astonished the synagogues and ghettos of Spain, there arose that order of Templars which legend has always accredited with the design of restoring Zion. From this source something has also been inherited or acquired by the later associations, which have assuredly drawn from many fountains, not excepting the Christian Mystics, who, in their own manner, dreamed of a spiritual sanctuary, from the days of St. Augustine and 'The City of God' to those of St. Teresa. The office and the mission of the Church itself may, indeed, be similarly regarded, for this is also a city of many palaces, which, in virtue of its inherent vitality, builds itself up from within, and is improved and beautified for ever by the continual transmutation of its living stones.

As the gate of initiation has been from all time a part of the symbolism of the mysteries, so the sanctuary in its turn has signified the mystery itself, and the illumination which it imparts to the neophyte. By the use of these sacraments each particular fraternity is in communion with universal initiation, and is a daughter of the secret knowledge of the past. The threshold is crossed by the aspirant in virtue of the possession of certain secret words which are imparted to him for this purpose. These words are, at first sight, simply conventional, and of themselves they convey nothing, but a consideration of their secret intention will take us a step further towards the understanding of the purpose of initiation. That which is in this manner imparted to the candidate stands for the Word of Life; it is an awakening of the soul's consciousness within the material man, and this consciousness is the first participation of the human in the divine nature. It is that consciousness which, by the hypothesis, was lost to man at the Fall, and the restoration of which is man's first necessity, if he is ever to attain his end. Peace has departed from the tabernacles and light out of the holy places, the sacred cities remain unfinished, and the sanctuary can be erected only in the heart because this consciousness, this Word of Life, has become lost or obscured.

When by means of the conventional word the candidate is at length admitted into the secret presence, we know that he looks to be restored in light, but he finds himself encompassed only by various signs and symbols which are also conventional. Within certain limits they vary with the nature of the fellowship, but there are signs and emblems common to all fraternities, and a short examination of these will show that they have the same significance as the other symbols with which we have been dealing previously. The candidate meets invariably with a symbolic mode of ascent, some spiritual mountain rooted on earth but its height ascending into heaven, signifying not only the just man whose body is in this world while his soul is in the world which is to come, but also the line of transcension by which the kingdom of earth is taken up into the kingdom which is not of earth, being the place of the king in his beauty. He will find also the secret stars of the microcosm and the macrocosm. The employment of these symbols is universal in occult science, and the explanation of their meaning occupies an important place in its literature. They are, indeed, the most widely diffused of all the magical signs. As regards the former, it is interesting to note that it is the only ancient emblem which Dr. Thomas Inman, after many researches, found himself unable to interpret. In the present place there can, of course, be no attempt to give an account of its history through the ages or to deal adequately with its sacramental value. In Indian symbolism it is said to represent the conjunction of Brahma and Siva, and thus even in the Far East it is a sign of equilibrium, which is a palmary meaning appointed to it by occult writers in the West. A Pythagorean origin has been sometimes ascribed to it, and it may have been derived by Pythagoras from oriental sources, but the historical evidence is wanting to countenance its connection with his name. It has been described as the badge of the Jewish nation, and it connects among the Kabalists with the Holy Place, the Sanctuary of initiation, which also connects with the microcosm. It has been found engraved upon Jewish tombs in the Roman catacombs. It was one of the Templar emblems, and has been thought to be identical with the mysterious symbol prescribed in the Diagramma of the Ophites for presentation by the ascending soul to the genius of each succeeding sphere, so as to obtain an unimpeded passage to the supernal light. Lastly, this same symbol has been discovered among prehistoric remains in the New World. The pentagram has externally five acute and internally five obtuse angles, and therefore consists of an outer and inner pentangle. To the inner pentangle great mysteries are ascribed by Cornelius Agrippa. At what period the complete symbol was introduced into western occult science is a matter of dispute; by some it is regarded as an early and by others as a late emblem. While in its conventional or elementary aspects it is a symbol of health and physical equilibrium, for occult science it represents Man in his entirety and the domination of the understanding, signified by the uppermost point. Reversed for the purpose of black magic, it represents the contrary of these ideas, namely, the demon and the materialisation of mind.

The symbol of the hexagram, unlike that of the pentagram, is more particularly Jewish, though it may not have originated in Israel, and it is frequently met with in Kabalistic parchment talismans and manuscripts of the Middle Ages. It has, of course, been naturalised on most Christian soils, and has been derived from Jewry into Islam. Though known generally as the seal of Solomon, it has also been termed the shield of David, which for the Kabalist signifies the covenant, by a graceful but exotic analogy. Finally, it is not entirely unknown to India; it is found on some gnostic gems, and, like the five-pointed star, is met with occasionally in old books of alchemy, though neither emblem can accurately be regarded as entirely characteristic of the Hermetic department of occult literature. The hexagram signifies for occult science the circulation of life from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven, and, therefore, illustrates the correspondence between things above and below.

It has been impossible to dispense with these details, though the enumeration is wearisome and does not lend itself to a decorative sense in literature. I must add, out of justice to my standpoint, that these emblems, which we may agree to call pictorial, are, ultimately, of no account to the mystic, whose symbols belong to different modes of representation. Such signs, in the last resource, are like the barbarous words made use of in magic; of themselves they communicate nothing, and are idols rather than sacraments. But they serve their purpose in connection with elucidations like the present. The difference between the natural man, complete in his own degree, and the arch-natural man whom we understand by the term adept, is, in fact, the difference between the star of the microcosm with its five points, and the star of the macrocosm to which a sixth point is added in the symbolism, signifying the super-addition, over and above our humanity, of that consciousness in the spirit to which I have already referred.

Through the several grades of his advancement, under the obedience of all the rites, the candidate symbolically passes through those experiences which are assumed to restore within him this consciousness of the higher kind, and the process of such restoration is almost invariably represented as a passage from death to life. Some of the mysteries deal only with emblematic death, wherein the candidate is practically left, and we must turn to others for the life which follows therefrom. In plainer words, it is idle at the present day to look to any single order or fraternity for the complete experience of the adept, and it would be only by the codification of all the rituals now in use among the greater sodalities in the western world that we should restore, if that were possible, the entire system of initiation. It would be difficult in the present place to investigate the causes which have thus dismembered the mysteries, and I have indicated in a former essay that their process, almost in its entirety, is to be found outside the circles of initiation, in books which are daily used by many thousands of persons who are altogether unaware of their significance. For example, the secret history of every initiation has been written once and for all time in the Gospels, where it can be found by any prepared student much more ready to his hand than in the Book of the Dead, in the remains of the Greek mysteries, or in what can be gathered from the sacred myths of India, and even of Christian Rosy Cross. But it exists in these also for those who can interpret their symbolism, while it follows from all that has been said that the same subject is treated after another manner with great beauty and significance in the rites of more recent societies which now exist in the West, and which do not differ materially as regards their intention from those greater mysteries of the past which claimed to communicate to their adepts that which at all times has been understood by the word Illumination—whereby the individual soul enjoys a certain measure of the universal life. Let us therefore have the courage of our convictions, and define initiation as a hieroglyphical abstract or itinerary of the reintegration of the mind in God, or otherwise as a summary of that science which the mystic Thomas Vaughan once termed both ancient and infinite.

I am too well aware that the measure of the fulness of this doctrine is, even for its preliminary realisation by the logical understanding, outside the possibility of many, and I speak, therefore, only to a small assembly of the elect, and of such as are capable of election, not doubting that those larger numbers which remain in the letter of the symbols, as in the porch of the spiritual temple, are also in the grace of the symbols and are partakers, according to their capacity, in a certain light and leading which shall befit them, by an age-long process of the initiation which we understand as life, for the greater ends beyond.

But for those who are conscious of the call, and who have been, or are about to be, affiliated with any of the secret orders, they must, of course, be prepared to discover for themselves, and at their own personal cost, that which has been outlined here. They will be met by many difficulties which, at first sight, will seem insuperable. It must be remembered that secret societies have no history in the strict sense of the term; they do not hand down literature, collect archives, or, perhaps, even preserve minutes. In those which are of recent constitution, to say nothing of others, it is no less than astonishing how the circumstances of their first incorporation, and the incidents of their early years, pass into doubt and obscurity; therefore the historical sequence is the first thing which will be found wanting. And, secondly, as already indicated, the whole experiment is not comprised in any single order; from the sacramental standpoint they are not in themselves perfect and complete ceremonies, as their technical description is sometimes made to affirm. They are rather as they stand a story without an end, and they presuppose a further action elsewhere, just as the greater mysteries of antiquity were to be inferred from the lesser mysteries, or as the novice postulates the knight. Thirdly, the action of the symbolic drama may, in a certain sense, be said to move in a dream, and the state of inhibition or somnambulism, which is a proper and sacramental description of our material life, is the most which is exhibited even in the last resource to the candidate, who retires with the simulacrum only of his desired object; he possesses the keys of death in place of the keys of life; he has participated at most in a light which is that of the lamp of the sanctuary placed behind the altar and not restored to the temple. I will say nothing as to the mental atmosphere which, unfortunately, at the present day is frequently to be met with in the sanctuaries, or the modern inconsequences which have served to obscure rites which are ancient at least by their connections. These and many other ineptitudes of the bourgeois mind are like the whitewash of the Puritan party, concealing but not destroying the pictured saints on the walls of our old churches; and the design of the particular ritual can still be discerned behind them. Nor need I say to that higher class of students for whom I am really writing, that the lesson of all the mysteries is that man does not easily escape from the sacraments, and that he does not elude his shadow by reversing his position in the sunlight, for such persons at least will be in a position to remember that the second sense is immanent in the letter of the word, and that, as Paracelsus said, 'He who eats but a crust of bread is communicating in the elements of all the starry heavens.' But I think also that by following this line of contemplation they will see dimly through these records of the past, that although the original scheme of human experience became void by an event which appears under the parable of the fall of man, and was subsequently replaced by another and lower form of experience, there is a narrow path leading back, as we have seen previously, to the original experience, and that human knowledge is not absolutely cut off from the source of life. In other words there is a way through the soul's legends, past all her sorrows and aspirations, past all her sacraments and elementary education of the material world, into a divine alliance.

Speaking for the moment simply from the standpoint of the diverse associations, one word of encouragement can be added; that which we may fail to find in any measure of completeness among the several occult fraternities now at work in England, can be sought, not indeed fully and completely, but still with much greater success, on the continent of Europe, where at the present day, and possessing also their representatives and envoys in England and America under the seal of secrecy, there exist certain orders and fraternities which are probably, though not without breaks and omissions, descendants of anterior societies, which, in turn, have derived from the adepts of the Rosy Cross and other dispensers of initiation about the period of the Renaissance, even as these, also in their turn, probably derived something from mystic groups of antiquity. Those who preserve and work them may not understand the whole of their significance; they may even have tampered with the traditional doctrine which they have pledged themselves to transmit intact, but the fuller scheme of initiation is contained in these almost unknown degrees, the very names of which in some cases have not transpired. Withdrawn as it may be frequently from the outer sense of their rituals, they do in the last analysis direct our minds to that great experience which by many vague hints and uncompleted allusions we know was communicated to the initiates of the old mysteries, an experience granted to man alone in the contemplation of the highest unity.

I believe that those who can enter into the considerations of this thesis will not only agree that they have expelled that sense of insufficiency which was mentioned in the opening, but will be forcibly reminded of at least one occult experience which occurs in the course of initiation; I refer to the consciousness that, in entering almost any one of the various brotherhoods, the candidate has been incorporated by a vital organism, and has entered into a living house. I am not speaking of the spiritual consanguinity which should and does frequently subsist between those who are brothers in the spirit, but of the enfolding power of the spirit itself as of a great and abiding presence, in some great and holy House of the Lord and Man. For myself and for the school which I represent, it is a sense of the presence which leads man from house to house of initiation, through many symbolic deaths, through many by-ways of the underworld, that he may at length be truly exalted beyond the sacramental orders.

I have abstained from naming associations and, as far as possible, from all direct reference. I am acquainted with several persons whose opinions on these subjects would be entitled to respect, and by whom it is questioned seriously whether there is anything in the mysteries which might not be put forth in the open day, because secrets of this kind, in the last resource, always protect themselves. That this is true within wide limits I am resolutely assured. At the same time, from the circumstances under which they are imparted, I am not less convinced that they will always remain secrets, and in these pages I at least have done nothing to unveil them. There are, moreover, other points of view from which reticence is entirely necessary, and it is not a convention which issues from an arbitrary pledge. If this were the only protection afforded to the mysteries they would have been betrayed long ago, but at a certain stage the initiate knows why a discretion has been imposed upon him, and during all which precedes that stage, half-secrets and preliminary instructions are alone within his reach; while, otherwise, in many of the initiations, and particularly those which are the more widely diffused, the higher knowledge has passed away from their stewards. So far as this paper is concerned it deals with the fundamental basis and the true purposes of initiation, and this general groundwork as well as its particular applications are not secrets; they are the common possession of all mystical philosophy. The method of attainment in respect of the precise details must naturally remain in concealment, but the groundwork itself is known to the whole world; it has been followed with all kinds of variations by many thousands of people in every age and country; and in its elementary aspect it is an exercise of that faculty without which even the commonest success in daily life is impossible.

To sum up: the sanctuary of initiation, symbolised externally in the temples of all the brotherhoods, is actually and mystically within man himself, and the most catholic and natural outward symbol of that sanctuary is the physical body of man. It is this which man enters at birth to undergo the initiatory experience of terrestrial life; it is through this, as through the gates of a temple, that he must pass again for the higher experience of which the mysteries are a philosophical economy. The uses of initiation consist solely in the protection which their processes afford to those who undertake the experience. This in itself, at least in its elementary stages, is not difficult of attainment and, more especially with certain dispositions, the doors open almost with fatal facility. The real difficulty occurs later on, in the co-ordination of the outward life in respect of that experience, and in the incessant blunders which all schools indifferently have from time immemorial made as to the induction of the suitable conditions. The existing initiations which contain in their rituals, their symbolism and in the hints which we can derive from their history, the process in one or another of its phases, but now in a petrified condition, are many, but the living initiations are few, and it is usually only through the first that the student can, with good fortune, find his way into the second. Even then the work will rest almost entirely within his own hands, and the chances are, in the majority of cases, that he will obtain merely an intellectual knowledge. The certainty which such intelligence conveys and the horizon which it opens are, however, in themselves an exceeding great reward.

And now, as a final word, let me say to those who can discern beneath the almost necessary inexactitude of every written statement the heart of truth which constitutes sincerity therein, that the force which has led the human civilisations onward from their immemorial beginnings has been always a secret power working behind the thrones, kingdoms, political systems, and religions of the world, and that this force has abode always, because it can abide only, in the sanctuaries of initiation. It may not be working less surely, because it is less ostensible, in this modern age, than it was at Thebes and Eleusis; and in the sacred scriptures which are acknowledged by the western world we find the first reference thereto even at the inception, when God is said to have walked with Adam in the cool of the evening; while, so far as those scriptures are concerned, we find the last reference in the last chapter of the Book of Revelation, in the description of the Mystic City. As from Egypt the Book of the Dead, and from India the wonderful literature which is contained in the sacred books of the East, so also from the occult sanctuaries Christianity came into the world; while, lastly, those who can understand in their full extent the references which are here made, will acknowledge with me that in the time which is to come, and, perhaps, at no distant date, another manifestation of that word which under its various forms and with its multitudinous variations constitutes the Word of Life, has also been destined to issue forth from the secret places.

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OUTSIDE the specific objects which by the hypothesis are obtainable in the higher initiations, there are many minor treasures in the holy places of the mysteries, and in their reflections and substitutes which have appeared from time to time in Europe. Some of these possessions, in their special degree, may be less or more important on their own account, being first, let us say, in a village of the countryside, when they would never rank second in Rome. They are valuable, that is to say, because directly or indirectly they connect with the idea of the end and with the stages in the progress thereto. That end being not merely hyperphysical but transcendent in the absolute degree, and supposing as it does the development of a transcendental faculty in man, it cannot be without interest and importance if in certain cases certain personalities can and do develop on the external plane those powers which, within recent years, we have come to term transcendental, though not, for the rest, exactly. It is at least relatively and externally interesting; it is in some cases a sign, or, if one may so say, a transitory warrant appealing to the logical understanding, bearing witness that the philosophical end is actual and not merely a conception of the mind which is, and has been, without any evidence in the external world. The philosophical end does not stand in need of this warrant to those who know it, for its evidences are in reality everywhere; but such things are valuable occasionally as testimonies, and it is not, as need hardly be said, without reason that the soul from time to time develops powers as well as graces. The powers to which reference is made, as apart from the graces, are by no means peculiar to the fraternities which dispense initiation, while it has been made plain on previous occasions that the graces also are in many respects no exclusive and particular heritage. By the hypothesis, the latter can be received more fully through contact with the mysteries and under the influence of their rule of life, while in respect of the former their process is carried further, and is also safeguarded by the accumulated knowledge of several generations. But the important point in the present connection is that the psychic faculties of humanity have, from time to time, been manifested indifferently in all places, while the position of the subject in these our later days offers no unfruitful field for our consideration, whether we are in a position to approach it as students who are acquainted with the mysteries by some personal participation therein, or simply as educated observers capable of comparing what is going on around us now with accumulated records of the past.

There is only one purpose tolerated by real initiation, but the occult societies which, in virtue of a formal curriculum, impart some kind of secret knowledge, less or more connected with transcendental processes, are, comparatively speaking, numerous, and it is to these, in particular, that the present observations apply. If we glance, then, at the history of occult association for such objects during the course of the last century, we shall find those objects various, ranging from the highest aspirations of mystic religion to the common practices of professional magic and the frivolities or impostures which have been connected almost indissolubly therewith. Yet the history of modern supernaturalism—to make use of a decried term—and the world's history, both exhibit that the content of secret association by no means exhausts the range of transcendental phenomena: that from all times, but in a marked and special manner during the nineteenth century, such phenomena have occurred, and do now manifest outside the circles of initiation; and that, indeed, the chief historical warrant of transcendentalism on the external and manifest side must be sought in the open day. Thus we have the phenomena of Animal Magnetism, of Hypnotism, of Spiritualism, of Thought Transference, our familiarity with which is due to no initiation, while they have developed their several testimonies without any indebtedness to concealed modes of communication. They have also—and this, in the present connection, is a point to be marked by emphasis—reproduced to a certain extent what has been termed the secret knowledge of the occult sanctuaries. It may be only a small part, it may be only the fringe of that knowledge, but telepathy, for example, or the power of impressing at a distance, offers results which are similar to the alleged exteriorisation of the psychic body by means of processes which have been preserved for centuries—as their claim states—in secret associations from all ken of the outward world. After every allowance for the fact that the great secrets, the really incommunicable experiences, will always be the great secrets, made evident to inward faculties and not by outward words, there is warrant, if it were necessary to dwell upon such a point, not merely that modern occultists who possess initiation are keenly alive to the fact that the secret knowledge has in part transpired, but that the natural divulgation of more in the course of rigorous research into psychic matters has become inevitable. The divulgation in question has been thought to have begun with Jacob Boehme, who, in virtue of a particular faculty in an extraordinary degree of development, would appear to have entered without personal initiation those realms of higher consciousness with which true initiation is concerned. In any case, it is from this possibility chiefly that psychical research, so called, borrows an aspect of importance, a fact which on its own part it would be indubitably the last to recognise. It has not added to the existing stock of knowledge, but it has gained what it possesses independently, and it is on the eve of further acquisitions. Physical science, moreover, imbued with far other ambitions, is traversing a parallel road which at any moment may abut on the same track. We have therefore:—

I. Phenomena arising outside circles claiming initiation, that is, independently of transcendental knowledge transmitted by the oral way.

II. Transcendental phenomena occurring within the circles of initiation, and it is in the second half of the nineteenth century that the claims preferred by the latter have been put forth most prominently.

Outside these two main divisions there is a third less important class, not falling under either of the preceding heads but including special revelations and independent schools, teaching with authority in virtue of some private credentials, but neither possessing nor pretending to a participation in any transmitted secret knowledge. They are not, as a rule, important, but it would be entirely unfair to say that they are merely delusion or imposture. A fourth class, which is in reality the most important of all, belongs especially to Christian mysticism. It has very little heritage from the past, has no conventional methods and no acquired knowledge, except in so far as it derives at this day its peculiar inspiration from the literature and the ascetic or devotional heroisms of the centuries of the Christian Church. It is for the most part devoid of any conscious or admitted connection with the phenomena called transcendental. Its claims are those of interior experience; its manifestations on the external plane are rare, and may be termed the phenomena of sanctity.

For the historian, as for the philosopher, there is, however, a connection subsisting between all divisions of the subject. As the spontaneous phenomena of the double, the history of which is older than any occultism, are, as I have shown in earlier pages, the sign-post of a natural possibility, from which, as from a starting-point, the old investigators may not inconceivably have proceeded on their path of exploration into the mysteries of the unseen, and as in this sense, therefore, the double may have given occult science to the world, so, as we have also seen, the unaided researches of the modern mind have already in a certain measure delimited the sanctuaries of initiation and have earned by the best of all titles a right to some of their treasures. Again, as the mystic experience of the saint produces, by the testimony of his life, some external manifestations which are parallel to others occurring in certain psychic fields of investigation where there is no sign of sanctity, so it may be inferred that the adept, the spirit medium, and the ascetics of the Catholic Church are all working with similar forces, with instruments more or less alike, and to an investigator having no preconceptions this fact gives fresh significance to research and fresh interest to its history. Nor does it tend to confuse the saint with the man of science, or the adept with the physical medium. Miracles are an accident of sanctity, and the voice of the saints has pronounced with some distinctness that they are also its weakness. Furthermore, there are many miracles which have an official connection with sanctity which are its burden and humiliation. The stigmatic is a signal witness to the pathological facts of transcendentalism, but, I submit, is no witness at all to the Divine pleasure in the devotion to the Five Wounds. And as on the one hand the Host which is defiled in the Black Mass of the Satanist proves nothing against the doctrine of the Eucharist, so the legends of the ensanguined bread and other devotional travesties can do nothing to confirm it.

It has been claimed that occult science, or the knowledge of the powers and the processes apart from the philosophical end, can assist the seeker along the steep path of sanctity; but no warrant for the statement is found in history, which testifies, on the contrary, with no uncertain voice, that the adepts of this knowledge were not saints, although in a certain sense the aphorism cited by Éliphas Lévi, and already quoted, may be said to hold: *Vel sanctum invenit; vel sanctum facit.* On the other hand, neither by initiation nor method were the saints in any sense to be regarded as adepts of occult science, though, without initiation, they were certainly advanced in the mysteries; and yet that science has assuredly its sacred aspect.

I am taking here a point of view which is, perhaps, scarcely more foreign to the ordinary observer of human affairs and interests than to the average occult student; for there are, at the present day, large, flourishing, and even important schools of occult thought which seem to make no distinction between the noumenal and phenomenal worlds, engineered as they are by persons who have apparently no consciousness of that which is essential to mysticism, while, of course, mere psychical research has little pretence of dealing with matters outside the tangible field of observation.

For the rest, and speaking for the moment simply from the evidential standpoint, there is just that kind of connection or bond of similarity traceable between what is known and proved in the external domain of psychical research and that which we have gleaned, surmised, and inferred concerning the secrets of the lesser occult sanctuaries from the hints, legends, and half-revelations of old occult books, to warrant us historically in believing that there was a real experimental knowledge of wide importance in the past, of which only the remanents have been preserved to us. There is just that kind of broad analogy between all that we have known of the one and all that we have inferred of the other and the incipient processes which now prevail among us, to justify us in regarding the latter, with all their necessary limitations, as the first keys of an experience which was carried far in the past, and will, in all likelihood, be again renewed by investigators working in the open day. While fully recognising the possibilities which are opened by these researches, it remains to say that they are not, from the standpoint of the philosophical ends, a path leading actually in the direction of these ends, because, in the first place, the psychic man must be distinguished from the spiritual man, and the development of the one, so far from tending necessarily to the awakening of the other, does not infrequently constitute a very real hindrance to the attainment of the greater objects. The history of what is called supernaturalism is overwritten everywhere with the fullest evidences that no psychic phenomena lead to any spiritual result if pursued for their own sake, and that those who have pursued them and have more especially experienced them in their proper persons have suffered in proportion to the extent and continuance of their experience. It is perhaps from one point of view very difficult to understand the reason, but it would seem as if such experiments were essentially disorganising. It is exceedingly convincing to the merely commonplace inquirer if under certain circumstances the levitation, let us say, of the human body can take place in the absence of all mechanical appliances, or if writing can be produced between slates which are undoubtedly locked; it will show him, I mean, that there are more things in the sphere of humanity than he may have been hitherto disposed to think, but it brings and can bring him to nothing approaching finality. The knowledge of the great mysteries of life in the universe must come to him through other channels than anything which is within the range of phenomena, and it is in some respects true to say that phenomena of the transcendental order are, perhaps, from any truly sacramental standpoint the least satisfactory that he could have.

It is really in the dissolution of the manifested world that the entrance to the true experience is alone attained. The old alchemists used to seek what they termed paradoxically the universal dissolvent. By some who understood them literally they have been held up to ridicule for supposing that such a substance could be contained in a vial. There is, however, in man a gift, a faculty, a latent stage of being or consciousness which is in truth an universal dissolvent, by the operation of which all externals are transmuted, and, to prolong the alchemical illustration, the matter of his work is found everywhere in the condition that he requires it for the attainment of the philosophical ends. The man who is possessed of this faculty, or has entered this stage of development, can and does become his own initiator, and he finds that the whole external order is the sanctuary in which the great and last secrets are imparted to him. He has no need to turn either to the East or to the West, to undertake any journeys and pilgrimages, actual or allegorical. I have mentioned already the name of Jacob Boehme, and so far as one person can judge of the internal disposition of another from the evidence of his writings, or what is known of his outward life, it would seem that he was for his period, and within the degree prescribed by his limitations, an example of a mind which had a peculiar natural right of entrance into this condition, and this is why, apart, so far as we can tell, from all external advantages, the records of his experiences cover so much of the field which is less or more included by initiation.

From this point of view it may be truly said that the material of the mysteries is about us. The purpose of formal initiation is to recall us by the assistance of certain high conventions to a sense of our true place in the universe, so that we may ultimately recognise that for us at least the whole universe is within, even as a landscape is within a looking-glass. It is only in so far as the external order is within us that we participate therein, and that it subsists for us. So far as it is independent of ourselves it is no concern of ours, and it exists only in proportion as it is known. The purpose to which I have referred is partially accomplished in the mysteries by means of a legend, which, variously presented, but always under deep veils, is, in fact, the soul's legend, the legend of our life. Another end of initiation is to show that outside the communication of physical life there is all that imparted to man which we understand by divine grace. There is no reason to suppose that such grace is something that is outside the universe, even in the imperfect manner that we are now accustomed to look at it, and to understand it normally; if the idea is to correspond with the term, then the universe must of necessity contain all things, but the human consciousness is only partially awakened to the various orders or to the infinite varieties in the ministrations of any single order. It is in this sense that the instituted sacraments can be regarded as entirely natural and even as the higher nature, and it is in this sense also that it is possible, as one German poet has said, to bear uninterruptedly the consciousness of the whole of humanity within us. In other words, the reflection, so to speak, of the individual glass of vision becomes merged in the reflection of the universal glass of vision which is common to the whole of the race; and this reflection, in certain stages of consciousness, is so full that it would seem to represent all things. If this is the philosophical end proposed to the postulant of the greater mysteries, we shall not be slow to understand that the difference between these and those lesser mysteries which have come to be characterised under the name of occult science, with all its processes, its methods of eduction and education, is generic rather than particular; and although the greater, at least by implication, may include the lesser, the lesser offers little analogy with the greater, outside the fact mentioned almost at the outset of these observations, namely, that experiences of the psychic order are to some extent indications and finger-posts pointing to spiritual possibilities, though they cannot really lead up to them.

Towards the attainment of this greater end the province of the conventional mysteries is one simply of awakening. Outside himself there is in this, as in the majority of other respects, no help for man, but the awakening hint may become a clue, and a mind which follows it may be led thereby, with some profit from the experience of others, in that direction which may be called the King's Secret.

STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES

THE more general scope of initiation, its mysteries and its purposes, has been sufficiently discussed in certain preceding papers, and it has been set forth as plainly as the nature of the case will allow, that albeit the hidden Fraternities are in possession of an experimental knowledge, and that therefore initiation is serviceable to those who have the zeal of that knowledge, yet precisely the same objects have been pursued independently of initiation; that the great experiences are not therefore an exclusive heritage of the mysteries, the province of which is rather to provide safeguards; while, finally, an intellectual acquaintance with these experiences is within reach of the student, without ever taking any one of those numerous preliminary grades which are supposed to lead towards the sanctuary and may certainly open the gates. There is, of course, another and mystical sense in which those who would enter the Temple must ascend by the steps of the Temple, but it calls only for passing mention, and, on the whole, to avoid misconception; since of certain steps even the poets can tell us, as, for example, Crashaw and Herbert. It seems necessary to add to the above summary that which is not less true, namely, that initiation, though it is not the only way, has its proper and distinctive features, even outside its safeguards, and that they can only be known by passing through the practical mystery of initiation. The experience connected therewith cannot be reduced into writing, because there is one incommunicable part, and this is the life of the sanctuaries, without which no instruction, however explicit, would enable a profane person to obtain entrance into any lodge of the adepts, if that were otherwise possible, but here it is necessary to understand that the incident of entrance does not in any sense communicate the peculiar life of the sanctuaries. It is in virtue, however, of this important fact that it is possible to speak much more at large on the whole subject than might otherwise be deemed expedient.

Among those who have followed the inquiry up to the present point, it must have occurred frequently to ask whether the systems of initiation which can be found ready to our hands in the public life of the world possess any power or guidance over the hearts and minds of their candidates in respect of those purposes which have been defined as the end of initiation. Of things which lie at our doors, possessing a local habitation and a name, it is obviously more difficult to speak than of institutions to which no name is given and no real clue afforded. Their position moreover is, in one sense, peculiar, because although they cherish in certain cases the memorials of the great experience, that has itself passed away from them, and there is nothing really communicated to the candidate but the pictures of the living things which have departed. It is for him alone to restore in his own person, by the means of the memorials afforded him, that life of which he is in search. If we take the most obvious among all the world-wide institutions, and under every reserve inquire whether that which we search for is present, veiled or otherwise, in Freemasonry, it must be replied that it is, unlikely as it may seem antecedently, but it has become curiously overlaid. It has passed almost out of memory and has undergone many strange substitutions, but the materials are still there, and it is possible to extract them. Nor do I mean here that which might not untruly be affirmed by every real mystic, namely, that every man, however unconsciously to himself, is in search of the divine absorption at every moment of his life, if only because he is in search of his end, and the mystic state is finality. I mean that in the symbolism and mysteries of Freemasonry, alienated as they now are from their first and sole intention, and rendered subservient to a simplified code of common or daily life, there are the remanents of the mystic quest, of the conscious search and the applied science of that state which is, as I have said, finality, and is so announced to us by the definitions of supreme theology through all the generations. Let us take a few instances only: Mysticism, according to Gerson, is an extension of the soul in God by the desire of love. Elsewhere he says that it is an anagogic movement or symbolic progress in God by pure and fervid love. Dionysius, the Carthusian, only varies the form of the axiom when he affirms that it is the most secret speaking communion of the mind with God. And the Greek Paraphast of Dionysius, the Areopagite, dealing rather with the term of the experience than with the experience itself, exceeds the previous definitions without really contradicting them when he states that this experience is neither perception nor discourse; it is not a movement of the mind, not a preparation, not a habitual condition; it is nothing that any power we possess may bring to us, but if in the absolute immobility of the mind we are illumined concerning it, we shall know that it is beyond anything comprehensible by the mind of man. To this Blosius, at once summarising and exhausting all, adds that it is a pure love which is outside representation, even as God transcends all the institutes. It is of this process and this experience that Masonry as it stands, unthinkable as the suggestion may be to many persons not otherwise unacquainted with it, is a kind of analogical image in wax. Nothing in its modern history will, of course, suggest this, nothing in the laws which govern it, and little also in the present wording of the established formulæ of its mysteries; but it lies embedded and withdrawn in the peculiar process of its advancements and in the hidden sense of its emblems, in all or nearly all of that which is done and shown forth, as apart from that which is expressed or suggested verbally. I should like, if I may so far venture, to add that I speak here of that which is to be found in Masonry and not of that which is sometimes taken therein, making every allowance for the fact that in most cases the great things are usually brought into the outward places.

It is no doubt for this reason that, among the secret societies, a peculiar interest has always attached for students to the Masonic Fraternity. It connects by its name with the trade guilds of the past, but beyond this name it has little in common with these. That it is a descendant of the architectural brotherhoods of antiquity is at first sight an almost irresistible supposition; but while this is at present the accepted view of instructed Masonic expositors, the difficulties which it raises from other points of observation are also very nearly irresistible, unless we can assume the interference of some wholly extraneous influence, with a genealogy altogether different, which took over the rough mystery or system of reception in use among the craft guilds, shaping it to another purpose, and out of the material art of Masonry developing a symbolical science, but, while adapting it to its own ends, at the same time preserving something of the old craft terminology, with some old craft emblems, and imparting to them a new direction and significance. An influence of this kind must be assumed, because Masonry, as we have it, is actually an epitome of universal initiation; and although this statement may not carry much meaning even for many persons otherwise well acquainted with the historical issues of the subject, they also, after their manner, have from time to time recognised the possibility of interference from without, and have endeavoured to localise it, intentionally or unintentionally, but always along the lines of the present contention. Indeed, the latest of all the authorities has expressed himself prepared for the possibility of evidence from a quarter which, for the non-mystic, is antecedently quite unlikely, namely, the Hermetic schools of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In this study and the two following papers it is not my intention to examine fully the validity of the most current theory, nor to define expressly the character of the interference which we surmise rather than trace. It is, on the contrary, to show how certain views of the past, not otherwise essentially valuable, and, for the rest, perfectly well known, together with certain facts, also of the past, and no longer of vital importance, have all along the historical and literary period of Masonry made manifest a tenacious but scarcely conscious instinct as to the true origin of the Fraternity. It is not an important field of criticism, but it has its points of interest, and though it is in no sense free from the disadvantages which attach to the conventions of argument, it will not be unserviceable to show that old views and old facts carry with them indifferently the same final consequences. I shall endeavour to exhibit first of all the real significance of the fabulous attributions of Masonry attempted during the infancy of archæological knowledge and research; secondly, the particular aspects of the Hermetic hypothesis to which allusion has been made; and lastly, the inward sense of a part of the high-grade movement during the second half of the eighteenth century. It must be understood from the beginning that I am not attempting to lead an argument to demonstration, but to indicate rather what follows, as already said, from old facts and old reasonings. If those who are members of the Fraternity will compare these consequences, which are matters of public knowledge, with several larger, more important, and truer issues which can be appreciated only by persons who are themselves Masons, they may, with some assistance from the inward light of the mind, be in a position to apprehend the precise scope of the statement that symbolical Masonry is an epitome of universal initiation. For initiations, of course, existed long anterior to Freemasonry, and many which are independent thereof continue more secretly than itself to co-exist beside it, some, indeed, living in the real sense of the term, while many have fallen asleep, or, in other words, have lost the true significance of the mysteries whereof they are the wardens. One further word is necessary by way of preamble. The peculiar kind of discretion which is imposed in connection with matters of this nature seems best exercised under the guise of a great simplicity and directness; it follows, therefore, that the higher claims of literary expression may be laid aside by an indulgence in favour of saying so much as can be said plainly, that guesswork and its confusion may be avoided. In pursuance of this plan I will, therefore, set out by affirming that these papers are notes intentionally imperfect on the literary and historical connections between Masonry and Mysticism, as to which I must assume that previous dissertations have established with some clearness the precise meaning which I attach personally to the last term.

When the symbolism of the craft mysteries, with their various developments and decorations, began to be studied historically by the Brethren, or, to fix the period, at the beginning, let us say, of the nineteenth century, it was, as already indicated, in the early childhood or pupilage of archæological knowledge; comparative mythology and history were practically unborn, and a wilderness of speculation was withdrawn into a wondrous depth of nescience. Yet amidst the indubitable extravagances of such a period, amidst its romances and its legends, there can be traced everywhere an instinctive zeal to refer Masonry in its original form to sources that are demonstrably mystic. More important even than this, when among some Brethren a more prosaic explanation was accepted, when the claims of the building guilds were, for example, recognised, they were raised out of the common category of trade associations and exalted, as we shall see later on, by an ascription of the most singular secret knowledge and the strangest connections in the past. Those who exhibited this desire and zeal did not for the most part know that which they were doing, and it is this which lends an interest to their attempts which might be wanting to a concerted effort. In all cases these old writers claimed for the Fraternity an antiquity of an immeasurable character, and they affiliated it in imagination with all institutions of the past which have claimed to dispense initiation, to all of which it undoubtedly bears a resemblance, as some of us have better reason for knowing at the present day. It is possible in one sense that the philosophical doctrine of initiation, apart from corporate connection, though not apart from some obscure form of secret transmission, might be sufficient to explain much of the indubitable likeness. At all times and in all places men under the same circumstances have thought and acted in a similar or identical manner. But whatever the actual grounds which may exist to justify the claim, the multiform literature of Masonry at the period now under review, and independent as it would appear of any occult knowledge on the part of the writers referred to, yet as if guided by a blind though unerring instinct, has referred the Fraternity, either as to origin or relationship, to the old secret sanctuaries. It would be unwarrantable to conclude that among those who devised these views, even the most enlightened had themselves the slightest mystic tendency; it was the least mystical of all periods, and personally they would be better described as protestants in the best or any other sense of the Church of England. We must not therefore pretend to discern in their unanimous action any distinct plan on the part of people who knew for the instruction of the collective brotherhood in the true beginnings of the order. To us at the present day the substance of that which they advanced reads frequently as little better than idle words, and yet in another sense it has its import, and a curious significance is traceable in some fabulous traditions which, if understood literally, would be unintelligent and preposterous in their quality. In other words, certain historical follies suggest subsurface ideas which belong to another category, though the ideas themselves are implicit rather than express in the consciousness of historical writers.

Such is, for example, the assertion that Masonry was invented by God, and is actually the science of God, who was, in fact, the first Mason because he was the first, the Grand Architect. Such also is the alternative statement that it was devised by Adam in Paradise, and is hence that science of perfection which was anterior to the science of good and evil. Yet beneath these seeming absurdities there is the simple desire to identify Masonry with primeval mystic knowledge—with that so-called universal science of which we read everywhere in the old literature of the mystics, and with that universal religion which is discerned by comparative mythology behind all the great religions. It is the hidden secret of God, contained in the Incommunicable Name of Kabalism, which was believed to impart all power and all wisdom to those who could pronounce it. The conceptions regarding this primeval wisdom have been the subject of much important symbolism, of which the heart and centre must be sought in the beautiful biblical parable of the Earthly Paradise. When we find Masonry identified as to its source with God, the reference, however unconscious, is to that original and positive knowledge with which the mystics have endowed the archetypal man when he was first differentiated from Deity, but still enjoyed the immersion of his individual soul in the divine consciousness, and thus knew all things in God. From this point of view the Masonic object of research, mystically interpreted, would be, for such speculations, simply this primeval knowledge, and the system embodied by Masonry would be a process for its recovery. But this also is the end of the mystics and the end of all their processes. In other words, the attribution is a crude and incommensurate recognition that in the first place we came forth out of the Great Mystery, and that in the last we return. After the same manner, when the origin of

Masonry is referred to the Garden of Eden, it is, again however unconsciously, and for the same reason, identified with the end of the mystic vision. There is no need to suggest at this day that, whether we have recourse to the account in the Old Testament or to the traditions of mythology, to the Books of the Talmud or the Kabalah, we are everywhere convinced of the symbolical nature of this garden. In its first significance, to make use of a popular convention, it is a condition and not a place, though every condition of humanity differentiated by the fact of individuality seems necessarily to suppose environment, while the idea of environment would appear inseparable from that of locality. If we look to the mystics for an explanation of such a condition, they would tell us that it is the intimate and rapturous communion with God which was enjoyed by the soul in its period of unfallen felicity.

Thus two mystifications, both of them current in the past, concerning the origin of Masonry, though absurd in their literal sense, are more readily intelligible in the light of the secret tradition, and the meaning which we have attributed thereto is that which old Masonic writers would have found in their hearts, could they have searched their hearts so deeply. This meaning, moreover, will furnish us with a key to the significance of certain other hypotheses which are not so universally discredited.

Some transcendental writers of our own epoch have sought to affirm—and we have seen independently the extent to which it is possible to concede their view—that the psychical researches which have characterised it have brought us to the doors of those old sanctuaries which were the depositaries of spiritual science in the far past; that they have placed within our hands the keys by which they may be opened; that we are pausing, so to speak, in the precincts of the temple and can almost distinguish amidst the chorus of the invisible hierophants the oracular utterances of antique initiation. Others, more direct in their methods, have said that we have attained that point in our inquiries regarding the undeveloped faculties and potencies of the human soul when the methods and direction of our future progress must be learned of those men who were formerly the adepts of that art in which we have ourselves taken the initial steps alone. The sanctuaries to which they refer are presumably those dedicated to the celebration of some ancient mysteries, and the adepts whom they mention would in that case be the hierophants and spiritual chiefs of those mysteries. There may have been mysteries behind the mysteries, and more holy places concealed within the sanctuaries, even as there may have been, and presumably were, the unknown superiors above the great concourse of the full initiates. Now it was precisely with these inner sanctuaries that Masonry was claimed to be affiliated in its origin, its secrets, or its purposes when past writers endeavoured to identify it with the ancient mysteries. There is no call in the present instance either to justify or to reject this identification. It is sufficient for the purpose to know that it was frequently made in the past, and that it involves the mystic derivation of the Masonic Fraternity. It is reasonable, however, to say that the analogy thus traced was supported by learning which may well have been regarded as conclusive at the period. There is more than one work dealing with the Masonic nature of the Dionysian and Eleusinian mysteries, and with the striking similarity said to have existed amidst the external forms of these secret associations, as well as the identity of their object, which even at the present day, after due allowance has been made, could prove instructive reading. The general conclusion was that Masonry and the mysteries 'were only different streams issuing from a common fountain.' Opinion was divided in the past as to whether the Fraternity was merely a later development of the mysteries, or whether it was actually their prototype. There were some writers who revolted from the opinion that it was second in the field and was simply the daughter of the mysteries, so they sought to erect it into the original system from which all forms of initiation have subsequently sprung, regarding it as the sole repository of every surviving vestige of that science which was lost to humanity by the Fall. For them it was the tradition of the vanished perfection, the testimony of its actuality in the past, the path of its reconstruction, the hostage even from the beginning of its ultimate and certain return. The particulars of the plea read strangely enough at this day, as, for example, when the Rev. George Oliver, in his *History of Initiation*, affirms as follows: 'The rites of the science which is now received under the appellation of Freemasonry were exercised in the antediluvian world, received by Noah after the Flood, practised by man at the building of Babel, conveniences for which were undoubtedly contained in that edifice, and at the dispersion spread with every settlement, already deteriorated by the gradual innovations of the Cabiric priests, and moulded into a form, the great outlines of which are distinctly to be traced in the Mysteries of every heathen nation, exhibiting shattered remains of one true system whence they were derived.'

Once more, the folly of this hypothesis is immaterial to our inquiry. The progenitor of a system which was fundamentally mystic must itself have had a mystic character, and it only remains for us to appreciate one further contention which was pressed by these early writers, and is here reproduced almost in their own words, namely, that the mysteries were fundamentally the same in all countries; that is to say, they were united in method and procedure and were indifferently transcendental in character. The same methods of indicating the process of regeneration were said to be in use among all; all shrouded their rites under similar marks of secrecy; all possessed the same mode of conveying instruction by symbol, allegory, and fable; all shrank from committing their mysteries to writing; all inculcated the immortality of the soul and a future state of retribution and reward; all had similar ways of exhibiting their doctrinal system in the pictorial ceremonial of initiation. It was thought further that, although called by various names in different countries, and referred to different founders, they were, when in their first and pure condition, all regulated by the same ritual, and that, therefore, when writers speak of the Orphic, Thracian, Isiac, Bacchic, Cabiric, Eleusinian, Adonic, Mithraic, Venusian, Vulcanian, Osirian, and other mysteries, 'the reader should understand that one and the same series of sacred ceremonies is intended, one and the same initiatory processes and revelations; and that what is true of one applies with equal certainty to all the others.' Older and greater authorities can, of course, be cited in precisely the same connection, as, for example, Strabo, who records that the Curetic orgies, which were celebrated in memory of the mystic birth of Jupiter, resembled those of Bacchus, Ceres, and Phrygian Cybele; the Orphic poems, which identify the orgies of Bacchus with those of Ceres, Rhea, Venus, and Isis; Euripides, who unites the orgies of Cybele, as celebrated in Asia Minor, with the Grecian mysteries of the Bromian Dionysius, and with the Cretan rites of the Cabiric Corybantes. It is useful for our purpose to exhibit at some length this fundamental identity, because it simplifies further inquiry into the second point with which our authorities were concerned, namely, the one and undivided purpose of all the mysteries. In this connection let us endeavour to recall what is signified and involved by mysticism, which is a practice rather than a doctrine, while the term of that practice is communion with God and immediate participation in Deity for the recovery of a knowledge and perfection which humanity is supposed once to have enjoyed, and to which in the process of the ages a return must be made by the soul.

The opinions entertained by the early Masonic historians on the subject of the ancient mysteries do not betray any special or independent research, and they relied mostly on students of the same period who pursued their individual inquiries without any reference to the question of Masonry. There can be no occasion to press the point, that as regards the purpose of the mysteries it was known then, as it is known now, that they displayed, in the words of Faber, 'the lapse of the soul from original purity into a state of darkness, confusion, and ignorance'; that they 'affected to teach the initiates how they might emerge from this state, how they might recover what they had lost, how they might exchange darkness for illumination, how they might pass from the gloom of error into the splendid brightness of a regained paradise. They claimed to confer upon the epopts the glorious privilege of seeing things clearly, whereas before they were floundering in a turbid chaos of error and misapprehension. The mysteries, in short, treated throughout of a grand and total regeneration, a regeneration which alike respected the whole world and every individual member or part of the world.' It is, in fact, to the ancient mysteries that we must refer, as perhaps the head and fount of mysticism, and as regards the Greek world the writings of initiated philosophers like Pythagoras, Plato, Proclus, and Plotinus constitute its original literature. When, therefore, the historical origin of

Emblematic Freemasonry is also traced to the mysteries, it is identified in that origin with mysticism. The hypothesis in question is perhaps the most popular, as it is necessarily the most plausible, of all the old explanations, nor must I conceal my supreme personal assurance, derived from considerations which cannot be cited here, that it is founded on a great truth only partially understood, that in virtue of this truth Masonry is the concealed epitome or the reflection at a far distance of the once universal science. There are other hypotheses, however, which deserve a passing notice, and chief in the list is the legend which connects Masonry with the Jewish wisdom of the past, regarding that wisdom as focussed, so to speak, in the symbolical significance of the first temple of the Jews. This hypothesis has the substantial advantage of being actually an implied part and parcel of the whole allegorical edifice; the reconstruction of the symbolical temple is, by the least extension of its symbolism, the ostensible end of the association, while its rites and liturgies are in close affiliation with that architectural glory of Jerusalem. At first sight this view of the origin of Masonry has no peculiar or distinctive connection with any secret form of knowledge, and yet, if we have recourse to the later literature of Israel, we shall find that connection not merely established, but that it is only by its light that the symbols of Masonry become themselves intelligible. The reference here intended is not at all to the old idea that Solomon, the builder of the first temple, was an adept of occult knowledge as understood by the ideas of magic, though he is affirmed by the baser kinds of late Jewish tradition to have made more progress in such matters than any other teacher among the sons of men. It is rather outside the personality of the king to whom Jewry owed its temple, and to the mystical interpretation of the edifice, that we must look for the connection in question. The few Masonic students who at the present day are acquainted with the literature of Kabalism, or even with the great recensions of the Talmud, will understand the reference which is here made, and will also appreciate the difficulty in this place of entering more fully therein. They will further be in agreement with me that the Kabalists at least were builders of a city not made with hands, and hence, in their own degree, that they deserve the mystic title of speculative Masons. Once more, as regards the issues of the moment, my concern is not to establish the plausibility of this or any other hypothesis, but simply to show that the identification of Masonry as to origin and symbolism with the building erected by Solomon is equivalent to saying that the brotherhood is referable originally to a mystic source, because the Jewish connections of Masonry are those of the Haggadic Legends rather than those of the Pentateuch.

As there are some who give preference to the hypothesis of the mysteries and others to that of Solomon, so a few attempted in the past to establish a harmony between both these views, and they have supposed that the wisdom of Judea originated with the Gentiles, or, alternatively, that Solomon and his successors were indebted to Egypt. The adjustment has taken various shapes and forms. It was advanced, for example, that the secret science, of which Masonry is the historical depository, was handed down from primeval times; that it survived the period of the Flood; that it was imparted by Abraham to Egypt, from which country it was communicated to Greece; that it was the science in which Moses was skilled, and that from him it descended to Solomon. No one at the present day would naturally advance this view, more especially in the form which it here assumes, but modern research leaves no room for doubt that the source of inspiration as regards the Greek mysteries was in the old sanctuaries of Egypt, while the quest pursued in these sanctuaries is illustrated exhaustively enough by the Egyptian Book of the Dead. As regards the whole subject of the identity and diffusion of the mysteries, it may be said that the force of the contention is by no means lost when the field of its application is extended, and if, with the old Masons and the better scholars of their period from whom they drew so largely, we could agree to regard the mysteries as a network of instruction which was spread from Thebes, Eleusis, and Athens to India, China, and Japan, and then, like the star of empire, taking its way westward and ramifying through Mexico and Peru, 'everywhere carefully concealed,' then the mysteries—and Masonry if it be one of these—have not been less mystical, but mysticism has been more universal. In any case, the value for true and esoteric Freemasonry of the alleged Jewish connection lies not in the Old Testament, nor in the building of Solomon's Temple, but in the affiliation of Jewish theosophy at a far later period with the remains of other oriental traditions, more especially if this connection depends on a transmission from the past, as in such event there is no other historic channel of transmission except the mediæval Kabalists.

As a part of the previous hypothesis, a connection between Freemasonry and the Jewish sect of the Essenes was frequently advanced in the past. I have already indicated that it was an age of archæological romance, and just as at the same period great volumes were written upon the subject of the Druids, so there was much learning displayed with scanty knowledge upon the mysteries of this Jewish sect. We are now content to confess that we know little concerning them, and this little is derived mainly from Josephus and Philo. It is sufficient to show us that they were a contemplative association, having secret doctrines, with which something of symbolism was combined. They have been thought to stand at the extreme limit of mystic asceticism, with the idea of the Divine Union ever before their eyes. Legend also, not entirely discountenanced by history, has connected them less or more with certain practical investigations of the spiritual world which assumed a theurgic form. As it is easy under all circumstances to establish a parallel between every method of initiation, the old writers found numerous analogies between the Essenians and the Freemasons, as, for example, that women were not admitted, at least into the inner circles; that particular signs of recognition were used by the brethren; that the rites and mysteries of the order were followed by a meal in common; and so forth. It is needless to say that there is nothing conclusive in the nature of these analogies, but again the value of the evidence is not the point in question. We are concerned only with what it involves. Supposing that the Essenians, to adopt the extravagant expressions of the past, were actually disguised Masons, or that Masonry originated in some sense either with or through the contemplative sect of Judea, then it certainly possessed those intimate mystic connections which are involved in the other speculations with which we have been dealing previously.

When we pass into the middle period of the Christian era we find Masonry identified with the institution of Chivalry, and especially with the Order of the Temple. Here it would be naturally supposed that the old writers were parting company with any pretence of mysticism. It would seem at first sight that no pleader in historical specialism, however ingenious, could say that the knighthoods of the West were the disciples of transcendental wisdom, nor would it at first sight appear more probable that they were architects in the literal sense, or that if in the mode of their reception there was any admixture of symbolism it would assume an aspect of allegorical architecture. This notwithstanding, that section of Masonic literature which ascribes to the Fraternity an origin among the knighthoods of Chivalry, has committed itself, within defined limits, to both these views. As regards the first, it must not be forgotten that the Templars at the time of their spoliation were accused of practices which connect them with some occult associations of the past; and in France, more especially, it has been advanced, in respect of the second, that their defence of the Holy Sepulchre had always concealed an ulterior design characterised by the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem. As a fact, there were many degrees and rites current in different countries during the eighteenth century which developed a crusading legend, and this legend from this standpoint wears a very curious aspect. It is further assumed that, under one and another guise, the rebuilding of the Temple was the real object of all the Crusaders, and that certain secret associations, which, from a very early period of the Christian era, were supposed to have dwelt in the Thebaid, made common cause with the Cross-bearing warriors of Christendom for the fulfilment of the same purpose, further claiming not only to be in possession of the mystic measurements of the first Temple, but to be derived from its original builders. It is left to be concluded that these Fraternities of the Thebaid were remanents of the older Essenian sodalities, and thus one hypothesis of a romantic and speculative character concerning the origin of Freemasonry is combined with another, and was, perhaps, supposed at the period to derive additional strength from the fact. As regards the Knights Templar, their abolition at the beginning of the fourteenth century was supposed to put an end merely to their visible existence without really destroying the order. To appreciate the full significance of these speculations, the student requires to be acquainted not merely with their Masonic aspect, but with corresponding speculations among occult writers belonging to the period in question, and even to later dates. The Templars, for example, have been accredited in these quarters with obscure sacerdotal designs conceived in the interests of old gnostic Christianity, and designed ultimately for the usurpation of sovereign political dominion and sovereign priesthood. They aimed, as we have seen, at establishing amid the architectural splendours of a restored Jerusalem and a renovated sanctuary the metropolis of the Church and the world. They were overwhelmed in the centre of the conspiracy, and it was on the eve of his immolation that the last Grand Master was supposed to have instituted what occult writers understand by esoteric Freemasonry. On this subject the last word has not as yet been said; the last researches still remain to be made; nor have certain follies been to their fullest degree exposed. That the Templars followed something more than the art of warfare in Palestine, if it is less than demonstrated, rests on more than mere speculation; the transfiguration of Templarism into Freemasonry may not be better than fable, but the influence, in its resurrection, of the first upon the second is historical fact; I am disposed to think that it began earlier than is believed generally, and that it is greater than some criticism is prepared to allow. The old speculations were, of course, extremely crude, and although Masonic writers, occultists, and even the accusations of contemporary enemies of the Templars all point in the same direction; yet with the evidence itself few scholars at the present day could profess any special satisfaction. Those who accept it now, in the expectation of further knowledge, must bear in mind that they are referring Masonry to a source which has generally been credited with a programme of an occult kind, and the balance of probability as to the actual aims of the Templars is, perhaps, equal on either side, even for those who have not penetrated below the surface of the subject; for, as already pointed out, it is in every way as likely or unlikely that the

Templars were mystics as that they were the architects by intention, whether physical or spiritual, of a New Jerusalem.

I have exhausted the limits which can be reasonably assigned to this portion of the inquiry, but there is still another hypothesis which calls for a moment's consideration because of its direct bearing on the whole subject. It has been advanced that the historical origin of emblematic Freemasonry is to be sought in the great society of the Rosicrucians, which is supposed to have disappeared from the horizon of history at the very time when Freemasonry first began to diffuse its light in public. The question is interesting, outside other considerations, more especially from the present standpoint, because the mystical character of the fraternity which is alleged to have been founded by Christian Rosy Cross cannot be questioned in criticism. There is no doubt that this association or fraternity sought that science which Masonry and some early mysticism supposed to have been lost with Adam, and although the connecting links have been invented rather than discovered, it is clear that those who admit the hypothesis are referring Masonry to an absolutely mystical origin. I have now passed in review the chief associations of antiquity with which Masonry has been sought to be connected by writers of some eminence in the past. With perhaps the single exception of the Knights Templar, their transcendental nature and purpose are sufficiently established, and hence it follows that, although scarcely knowing what they did, the trend of intention among early historical investigators was throughout to refer Masonry, in doctrine, object, and symbolism, to the science and philosophy of the mystics.

It has not been through any deficiency in the attempt if I have failed to make plain that one and all of the speculations which have been dealt with in the present paper belong to the higher order of archaic fantasy and to nothing more. In the present state of our knowledge I do not personally challenge the one fact for which we have any evidence in respect of Masonry, namely, that its immediate antecedents are the old building guilds. Mary's Chapel and other early lodges have records which, up to their point, are in this respect conclusive. I am still more certain that such antecedents are as incapable of accounting for the Third Degree in the Craft as for the Thirtieth Degree in the Ancient and Accepted Rite, to contrast two extremely divergent cases. It follows therefore that the craft mystery was transformed into another mystery, or that some other element of secret life was brought into it entirely from without, and this with such result that speculative Masonry, as we know it, has for some centuries carried with it precisely those marks and seals which made even the foolish old scholars of the past see through their inverted and scoriated glasses something of what it actually is; and therefore in the midst of much idle talk they provided, unconsciously to themselves, a Master Key of the Sanctuary.

THE BUILDING WORD

AMONG the mental characteristics of modern life one tendency which has been often noted is the reticence of the religious temperament—an observation which applies, however, only to the nations of the West. The Mohammedan, for example, is conscious of no nervous susceptibilities in respect of the public exercise of his faith. The devotional feeling in the West is, in spite of occasional outbursts of religious frenzy, now less or more in the past, almost always inseparable from a certain sense of shame, which too frequently may be a concession to the spirit of the world, but has, also not infrequently, a possible foundation in a deeper and even in a sacred feeling. It is partly, in this case, a subconscious acknowledgment of the essential value of secrecy in things which, like religion, partake of the hidden life. The majority of those people who make it are certainly unaware that the old literatures relating to this life have always inculcated the value of such concealment, and I have therefore described the impulse which thus actuates them as subconscious rather than as an open course actuated by the direction of the will. In part also the characteristic with which we are concerned is a recognition of the mystery which inheres in all processes of religion, and this mystery is something entirely distinct from that condition of concealment which may encourage the operation of those processes, even as the life of the germinating plant is fostered and developed in the concealment of its native soil. On the other hand, so far as regards the outward life of religion, the condition of simple and unconcerted reticence is a late growth of the mind, and it is for this reason that the influence of the spirit of the world is, on the whole, the factor which most generally accounts for its existence.

THE BUILDING WORD

There was a time in the western world, let us say, in France and in England, when the performance of the external ordinances of religion, in so far as they were imposed upon the individual as apart from the community, and apart therefore from the public ceremonial of religion in the ecclesiastical life of the Church, was distressed by no such reluctance, and when the mystery was in no sense belittled by its open acknowledgment. If we turn to the old romance-literature of the Middle Ages, and especially to the books of chivalry, we shall find the religious sentiment, and its public expression, wholly natural and unforced, permeating ordinary life at every turn and entering into its minute details. To us at the present day, the forms, trivial in themselves, which prevailed even at greeting and parting, as equally in a thousand other accidents of the moment, assume spontaneously the aspect almost of religious exercises, so that the characteristic of human existence, rough in many respects as it may have otherwise been, was really an inherent sanctity. Without any formal thought on the part of the users of these conventions, and at the same time without any sense that they were merely conventions, something hallowed the round of the hours. This was doubtless more conspicuous among the better classes of the period; it is exhibited to us more especially in the institutes of chivalry, and perhaps it was a part of those institutes, yet it was not in any real sense limited to these, and if one cared to state the position in the terms of philosophy, it would not be too much to say that all this was a direct result of that sense of the immanence of God which stands out so clearly at those periods when the mind is unobscured by the extraneous issues of knowledge. It was accompanied by much that was inexact in opinion as to the precise nature of the interpenetration of things transcendental and things material, and in this way no doubt other obscurations arose which it would not be correct to minimise, but they served, on the whole, to intensify even when they misdirected the sense. Thus the immediate interference, so to speak, of the hand of God was continually recognised, not alone in the conduct of the world but in the daily affairs of individuals; that it was recognised in commerce is made evident even to the present day by the archaic forms of our bills of lading. Indeed, every trade may be said to have had its external religious aspect, whether or not it had also, as it had occasionally, its particular mystery. The religious aspect was, of course, distinct from the mystery in all that concerns the object. There can be no question that the first office of a trade mystery was to keep the trade secrets within the grasp of the fellowship, while the religious aspect was in many instances simply the natural outcome of the temper of the time, and it is by reference to this disposition that we shall look also for the most simple explanation of the fact that the mystery itself assumed on occasion something of the guise of religion. It took this form of necessity. The imposition of duty was always an act of religion, and an appeal to its high sanction. That is to say, when, in order to increase the solemnities, for example, of a reception, with a view to impress the candidate by the importance of the obligations which he was taking, some kind of ceremonial was adopted, that ceremonial was frequently enough, within certain limits, religious in its character, but at the same time the mystery was a craft mystery, and it was religious by accident and not by essence, by the essential connection recognised between duty and religion. If there was a trade guild in which from theoretical considerations a more profound tincture of religion could be assumed, it would be that of architecture. It was the craft which, above others, was most pursued under the influence of Church patronage, under the guidance of the monastic orders, and it had as its chief object the erection of cathedrals, churches, and monasteries. Those whom the genius of Gothic architecture has sufficiently possessed to confer upon them, as it were, the freedom of the spirit of that architecture, will understand me well enough when I speak of its religious character, outside all that can be explained merely by the association of ideas. It is difficult to suppose that the artists in stone who planned and executed the great triumphs of Gothic building art were themselves wholly unfamiliar with its spiritual message. Those achievements are sacraments to us at this day, and in some measure and proportion they must have been sacramental also to their makers. But in this supposition there is nothing to account, on the one hand, for the transfiguration of operative Freemasonry into an emblematic or mystical science by any process of natural development at work within the bosom of the Fraternity, nor, on the other hand, is there anything to explain the presence in emblematic Freemasonry of those elements which connect it with the transcendental and mystical initiations of the past. It is certain that either the transfiguration in question did take place in some natural and gradual manner, but of this it cannot be said that there is any real historical evidence, or, alternatively, that the symbolical system was at some period grafted upon the one which was of an operative character, which also it suspended quietly and relegated to the greater shadows. While accepting, therefore, the origin of Freemasonry, as we now have it, in the guild of practical architecture, it is necessary above all that we should bear this point clearly in mind, though it is not one which may appeal very generally to the majority of Masons at the present day. They might indeed be puzzled as to our precise meaning, when it is said that the whole process of initiation is summarised by a short recension in the initiation of Masonry; that, at however great a distance, it contains within itself, although in a glass and darkly, all that was shown forth in Egypt, Thebes, and Eleusis, at the King's Sabbath, in the Hermetic Art, and in the Rosicrucian Mystery. It follows from this that either the builders of old were more than common builders, or that they came into connection with the stewards of some knowledge which was outside their own. I have mentioned previously that a few among the more accepted contemporary writers on Masonry are even now disposed to recognise the interference of the mystics in the brotherhood some time during the course of the seventeenth century—an interference to be distinguished from that of another kind, which must also have occurred at the beginning of the eighteenth century, in connection with the first introduction of the high grades.

As there is no opportunity to deal in the present place with this latter portion of the subject, I will merely mention in passing that prior to the period of the French Revolution the whole mystical activity of France gathered publicly under the Masonic banner, and there is no doubt that, in addition to pursuing in the shelter of the lodges their own particular schemes, there are the fullest evidences of an intention on the part of the mystics to transform universal Masonry in the interest of some one or other of their various schools of thought. The subject has been made recently a particular study in certain French literary schools which claim to bring special knowledge thereto. The knowledge is perhaps unsubstantial, and the historical methods which govern it are not of the soundest order, but it may be interesting to note that the old and quite exploded theory of Jesuitical influence in Freemasonry, and more especially in the high degrees, has now been exchanged for a secret influence working among the mystical schools within the Church of France for the purpose of influencing the Fraternity and slowly transforming its character and intentions. The great name of Fénelon is cited in connection with this attempt, but the only warrant for the fable lies in the fact that the Chevalier Ramsay is believed to have been one of his pupils, and the name of Ramsay is, no doubt, of great importance in connection with high-grade Masonry. That he possessed any mystic knowledge, or had the least interest therein, we have no actual evidence, but the inference is almost irresistible, from the simple associations of his life.

The recognition mentioned above is to be distinguished entirely from those enthusiasms of earlier generations which have been dealt with in a preceding paper, and it is the more satisfactory in consequence to cite it in the present connections, and to realise that the last tendency of criticism, like the first dreams of the old investigators, brings us to one standpoint, namely, that no explanation of the emblematic art seems possible without reference to the mystics who, equally with the representatives of that art, sought first safety and then common support and assistance in concealed association. In addition to the hypotheses of which some account has already been given, the early archæologists of the Fraternity did not in many cases ignore the claims of the building guilds of the Middle Ages to be regarded as the most natural explanation of the origin of emblematic Freemasonry, and it will not be uninteresting to note after what manner they created a harmony between this view, which of itself carries no consequence of living interest, and those explanations which have recourse more directly to the ancient mysteries, the Essenes, or the wisdom of Judea as a source of inspiration. We shall see in this manner how the old literature of the subject endeavours to account for the existence of a speculative element, an element of parable and symbol in the heart and centre of the laborious operations of the builders' art. As in the previous instances, there is little in the explanations themselves which would warrant their serious treatment in the light of existing knowledge. One curious fact characterises them all, though there is little reason to suppose that the various investigators in England, France, and Germany had any particular acquaintance with each other's lines of inquiry, namely, that all had recourse instinctively to the same source for their materials, which was the perpetuation from antiquity of the building art, and of certain other mysteries in connection therewith, through wandering confraternities of builders. They seem to recognise almost unconsciously the fact, that from all times the Nomads have been the stewards of the peculiar mysteries native to the place of their origin. There is not much choice possible between any of the views that were advocated, nor is there need to reiterate that they have been all long since made void, but the following quotation is derived from a well-known source, once in considerable repute:—

'It is advanced that the people of Attica went in quest of superior settlements one thousand years before the birth of Christ, that they settled in Asia Minor, and that the provinces which they acquired were called Ionia. In a short time these Asiatic colonies surpassed the mother country in prosperity and in science; sculpture in marble, of the Doric and Ionian orders, was the product of their genius. They returned to instruct their mother country in that style of architecture which has been the admiration of succeeding ages. For these improvements the world is indebted to the Dionysian artificers.'

By the scope of this hypothesis these men were, however, no ordinary builders. They carried with them their mysteries into Ionia, and these, in fact, were the mysteries of Bacchus. 'They were an association of scientific men who possessed the exclusive privilege of erecting the temples, theatres, and other public buildings in Asia Minor. These artists were very numerous in that part, and they existed under the same appellation in Syria, Persia, and India. They supplied Ionia and the surrounding countries as far as the Hellespont with theatrical apparatus by contract, and they erected the magnificent temple at Teos to Bacchus, the founder of their order. About three hundred years before the birth of Christ a considerable number among them were incorporated by the command of the king of Pergamus, who assigned to them Teos as a settlement, it being the city of their tutelary god. Members of this association, which was intimately connected with the Dionysian Mysteries, were distinguished from the uninitiated inhabitants of Teos by the science which they possessed, and by appropriate words and signs, through which they could recognise their brethren of the order. Like Freemasons, they were divided into lodges, which were distinguished by different appellations. They occasionally held festivals in houses erected and consecrated for the purpose, and each separate association was under the direction of a master and president, or wardens. They held a general meeting once a year, which was solemnised with great pomp, and at which the brethren partook of an entertainment provided by the master, after they had finished the sacrifices to their deities, and especially to their patron, Bacchus. They used particular utensils for their ceremonial observances, some of which are exactly similar to those which are now employed by the Fraternity of Freemasons. The very monuments which were reared by these builders to the memory of their masters or wardens remain to the present day in the Turkish burying-grounds at Siverhissar and Eraki. These monuments were erected about one hundred and fifty years before Christ, and the inscriptions upon them were published by Edward Chisholm in 1728 from copies taken by Consul Sherrard in 1700. The inscriptions express in strong terms the gratitude of the Fraternity for the distinguished exertions of the wardens on behalf of the order, for their generosity and benevolence to its individual members, and for their private virtues as well as for their conduct in public. From some circumstances which are stated in these inscriptions, but particularly from the name of one of the lodges, it is highly probable that Attalus, king of Pergamus, was a member of the Dionysian Fraternity. If it be possible to prove the identity of any two associations from the coincidence of their external forms, we are authorised to conclude that the Fraternity of Ionian architects and the Fraternity of the Freemasons are exactly the same, and as the former practised the Mysteries of Bacchus and Ceres, it may be safely affirmed that in their internal as well as external procedure the Society of Freemasons resembles the Dionysians of Asia Minor.'

One point requires to be borne in mind in connection with this citation, otherwise so highly fantastic, namely, that the Bacchic Mysteries were as much concerned with the legend of the soul and its transmigrations, with the doctrine of the second birth and with the process of illumination, as were the several others which had previously flourished in Egypt, or those which were their contemporaries at Eleusis, and that if, according to these early speculations, emblematic Freemasonry originated in the old operative guilds, if these were in turn derived through many transfigurations from Dionysian architects, who were hierophants of Bacchus and Ceres, then as the secrets of the mysteries were the arcana of the mystics, assuredly the Dionysian artificers carried with them into Ionia, and thence in later wanderings, at least some knowledge which had only an ostensible connection with building crafts. It is true that the mysteries became corrupted with time; they lost sight of their sublime objects, they fell into idolatry and superstition, and vice flourished in the sanctuaries of symbolical wisdom. But their ostensible purpose was always the same, as the ostensible purpose of Masonry is still, on the lowest estimate, one of an ethical kind, though there has been in some countries a lapse in the standard of initiation and a loss in the moral vitality.

Thomas de Quincey, who once adopted the speculations of a discarded author regarding the origin of Freemasonry, has told us in connection therewith that the Greek mysteries are the great imposture of the ancient world. There is no reason to suppose that he spoke with particular knowledge, even of a scholastic kind, and as his opinion of Freemasonry in the modern world is similarly stated, he does not call to be regarded seriously. The only reason for mentioning his name in the present connection is to put on record the fact that a peculiar equipment is necessary on the part of those who enter upon the study of the mysteries. The classical authors, who are supposed in the world of scholarship to be the sole source of our knowledge, are entirely insufficient. It is essential that the student should possess a first-hand acquaintance with later forms of initiation and a vivid realisation of the symbolism shared by these in common, as well as the particular symbolism characteristic of the several schools. In a word, the mysteries can be understood only by the mystæ, and those outside the secret associations of modern times, even with the best intentions and scholarship, can hold only extraneous views.

Those who framed the hypothesis of the Dionysian artificers trace the existence of the association in an uninterrupted continuity down to the artisans of Byzantium, and thence to the building brotherhoods of Western Europe. They are successively connected with the various secret associations which have been spoken of in the preceding paper, and are thus unconsciously identified with transcendental designs and history in a still more intimate manner. They are traced, for example, in Judea, at a period previous to the Temple; that sacred achievement of Solomon was, on the authority of Josephus, erected in the Ionic style, and it is, therefore, inferred that the Dionysians assisted in its construction. They are traced through the Fraternity of the Essenes, though the Essenes were a contemplative sect who could have no connection with architecture of a material kind. They are traced even through the Templars by recourse to their supposed design of restoring to the despoiled Zion the glories of its emblematic Temple. By a succession of similar fictions we are brought down to that trading association of architects which is thought to have appeared during the Middle Ages under the special authority of the See of Rome. 'As the demand for splendid monasteries and magnificent cathedrals arose, in order to encourage the profession of architects, the Bishops of Rome, and other Potentates of Europe, conferred upon the Fraternity of Freemasons the most important privileges, and allowed them to be governed by customs and ceremonies peculiar to themselves. The association was composed of men of all nations—of Italians and Greeks, of French, German, and Flemish artists, who were denominated Freemasons, and who ranged from one country to another, erecting those elegant churches and cathedrals which now excite the notice of antiquaries. The government of this association was remarkably regular. Its members lived in a camp erected beside the building on which they were employed. A surveyor or master presided over and directed the whole; every tenth man was called a warden and overlooked those who were under his charge; and such artificers as were not members of this Fraternity were prohibited from engaging in those buildings which Freemasons alone had the title to rear.' In this case, it would be through the patient investigation of the privileges accorded by Popes and Potentates to the Masons of the Middle Ages, that we might look for some further light upon the antiquities of the craft degrees. The results of modern research do not, however, countenance the idea that there was any special patronage of builders at the headquarters of the Latin Church, and it has been well observed that as regards Italy in general it was the one country in Western Europe which came least under the influence of Gothic architecture.

A disposition to severity might characterise the hypothesis as beneath even those forged documents which abound in Masonry, being devoid of the doubtful advantage which attaches to the skilful production of spurious archives. The archaic history of building confraternities is involved in immeasurable difficulties, and perhaps it can scarcely be anticipated that any future investigations will offer demonstrative evidence. It should be understood that the particular speculation to which a place is accorded above belongs to the domain of legend, and there is no call to deal seriously with its pretensions. As regards the building guild and its mysteries generally, with their alleged transcendental connections, I have been throughout only illustrating an undoubted instinct of the past, which is also within certain limits an instinct still existent. In other words, the notion of mystic influence has, though naturally in a modified form, survived the test of a very large body of additional research, and a very serious change in scholarly opinion has been consequent upon that research. The possibility of such influence followed in the past from views held by those who in their day and generation had some title to be regarded as authorities on the subject, and so in the present day it remains the opinion of a few who are also entitled to speak; but, as previously pointed out, the mystic derivation of the Fraternity was in the past rather an implied consequence not actually appreciated, while in so far as it is held now, that which is actually involved is partially in all cases, and in some very keenly, realised. The inherent difficulties remain, as I have said, notwithstanding. The affiliation of practical architecture with corporate mystical bodies, which is the present tendency of speculation, is antecedently as improbable as the ascription of mystic designs to the several institutions of chivalry. The motives which actuated the old knighthoods, if they cherished in reality some such ulterior design as report has ascribed to the Templars, almost exceed explanation, and after the same manner we cannot see on what ground or with what actuating motive the building guilds should have gravitated in the direction of those secret orders which have handed on the tradition of transcendentalism from antiquity. But, improbable or even unimaginable, the direct and indirect evidence, so far as it exists, still points in this direction. It is well to admit at the same time that similar observations would apply merely to the allegorical construction of the building art. If we isolate the operative guilds from all supposed correspondence with the ancient mysteries, with the Essenes and Dionysians, with Solomon and with any Kabalistic interpretation of the Temple symbolism; if we take them just as they are, acknowledging that much of their history must remain uncertain for want of sufficient materials, confessing the doubt which surrounds the place and period of their origin, but supposing that they arose—like other trade unions—as a matter of trade convenience; if we picture them in the first instance as a rude association of workers in stone and clay; it is still almost indubitable that out of these guilds the modern Fraternity was somehow evolved. At some period and in some place something occurred so to transfigure these craftsmen that they ceased to hew stones, to make bricks, to plan and to build edifices, that they laid down the chisel and the hammer, assumed the mantle of the philosopher, and concerned themselves, theoretically at least, in the progress of humanity and the perfection of its moral nature. How this actually occurred no authority in England, at least, feels competent to affirm. The presence of a non-operative element among Masons at a very early period is suggested, and there is some evidence. In *The Concise History of Freemasonry*, recently published by Mr. R. F. Gould, and containing a summary and extension of his larger work, he regards us as justified in inferring that from the fourteenth century, and possibly earlier, there were associations of speculative or symbolical character as apart from practical masonry, though with the impartiality which characterises him, he adds that on this point the judgment of some leading authorities is opposed to his own. On the other hand, the practice of receiving within the ranks of the Fraternity men who were neither architects nor builders, and that not merely as patrons, cannot be challenged seriously.

If the transfiguration ever occurred with anything approaching suddenness, it was in England, about the middle of the seventeenth century. The Reformation had succeeded the Renaissance, and with all the disabilities attaching to both movements there can be no doubt that there was a great extension of the intellectual horizon. Many new avenues of thought had been thrown open, and men being comparatively free to speak and act, acted and spoke freely, within the limits of their opportunities, while among other things there was a new impulse in Germany and England given to the study of several branches of inquiry which antecedently could have been and were only pursued with something of peril to the student.

As regards the Reformation more especially, the result of which we are at the present day in a better position to appreciate than was possible with the particular spirit which influenced historical research till recently in England, the loosening of the old lines brought knowledge of things transcendental, and certainly brought interest in that knowledge out of the ecclesiastical sanctuaries. Within the bosom of the Church the mystic life had been led, and the records of that life are not less wonderful than among the schools of initiation in the ancient world, whether in the East or in the West. There is no certain trace, however, that the tradition on which it was founded went far back into the past; that is to say, in order to explain Christian mysticism within the Latin Church, it is not necessary, nor is it indeed possible, to presuppose a transmission of doctrine or practice. At the same time the external Church had worked to some extent upon the symbolical materials of paganism, as it would do almost unavoidably, because it was an hierarchic church. It was always jealous and nervous regarding any manifestation of the mystic life not only outside its own fold—because for many centuries in Western Europe no other fold was possible—but even outside professional religious and monastic life. It was afraid also of the claim of illumination, and it was implacably hostile to any ancient tradition of this kind which appeared within the sphere of its control. Outside the common persecution of magicians and of witches, which is explicable on different grounds, and which found its justification largely in the public opinion of the time, it pursued unrelentingly all claims to secret knowledge, to all that which is understood by the term adeptship, independently of any connection on the part of the persons concerned with the grosser and more superstitious forms of occult practice. It did its best, moreover, to extirpate the remanents of the ancient customs of country people when these customs suggested any perpetuation of religious elements from a pre-Christian period, and while it was undoubtedly actuated in part by the idolatrous nature attributed to these practices, there was the suggestion, also, of a desire to eradicate the memorials of past knowledge as well as of past superstitions.

In England the practical experiment of alchemy was undertaken by numerous persons, and it is just prior to the date which I have mentioned that the rumour of the Rosicrucian Fraternity raised curiosity in Europe. Hermetic literature, not only with a modern accent, but almost for the first time in vernacular language, was created, and schools of theosophy sprang up in several countries. The original root of the movement was in Germany, from which also the Rosicrucian manifestoes emanated, but the impulse reached England, and some of the most illustrious names in connection with the subject are identified with this country. Hence came Alexander Seton, the instructor of Sendivogius: hence came Eirenæus Philalethes, who has been regarded as one of the great masters of the Hermetic Art. Hence came Robert Fludd, one of the chief advocates and apologists of the new Rosicrucian principles. Hence also came Thomas Vaughan, mystic as well as alchemist. At the same time there flourished the school of Cambridge Platonists, with Henry More at their head. Here lived Joseph Glanvil, the disciple of Pythagoras, and here, in 1640, lived Elias Ashmole, alchemist and antiquary, and the founder of the Ashmolean museum at Oxford.

There are evidences to show that the pursuit of alchemy in England was, at the period of Ashmole, an exceedingly old pursuit. It was practised, certainly, in the time of Chaucer, but the literary remains of its early period are non-existent rather than scanty. Vernacular manuscripts date, broadly speaking, from about the fifteenth century, and Roger Bacon is an early name cited in connection with the subject. As regards printed books prior to the seventeenth century, these also are few and far between, but no doubt there were many practical processes derived from Latin books, chiefly coming over from Germany. At the beginning of the seventeenth century there must have been a great awakening of interest, though it is clear from evidence personally furnished by Robert Fludd that his own voluminous writings, many of which bear on this subject at least indirectly, found a considerable public abroad, and next to none at home. The interest grew, however, and must have been widely diffused before the middle of the seventeenth century. It was also maintained and stimulated by visitors from abroad, who claimed or were assumed to be in possession of the most important secrets of this science. In this way it was that English students, following the general tradition of the literature, and taught, moreover, by the particular experience of their own failures, came to regard the art as a secret transmitted rather than as a mystery that could be acquired, and it is very likely that one result of this feeling would be the association of pupils under the guidance of an adept or master. In this way also informal alchemical associations may have come into being, but they have left no trace behind them. It should be added that the horizon of alchemy in England was more limited than it is found in certain developments abroad, where its traditions came almost to rival the so-called universal science of Raymond Lully. By means of the Hermetic Art, men hoped in England either to transmute metals or else to produce an elixir which would heal diseases and prolong life. When they sought after these secrets, and when they wrote concerning them, there is little evidence of any ulterior object in view, such as we find abroad. Philalethes, for example, though a great name, as I have already stated, in the English school of adepts, has no trace of the catholic interest of Paracelsus, and it was not until Thomas Vaughan wrote his strange little books on the subject that alchemy in England began to come really in touch with the subject as it was pursued abroad, and to assume, therefore, something of the accent and intention which helps to connect it, as it undoubtedly does connect, with certain aspects of the initiatory process.

The Templar hypothesis may still flourish, though it scarcely possesses a literature, among the Templar Fraternities in England, and the great Scottish Rite may implicitly or otherwise continue to hold that there is some historical foundation for part at least of the legend of its eighteenth degree, while it is committed also in a certain sense by the legends of still higher grades to some of the many variants of Templarism; but these opinions are no doubt held fluidically without much concern regarding them, and for the rest they leave the views of modern scholarship within the general ranks of the Fraternity entirely untouched. But a respectable section of authority has always looked in the past, and looks still, towards Elias Ashmole and his connections, as in some way, still undetermined, the representatives of the transition from operative to speculative Freemasonry. In France from the days of Ragon there has been practically no question on the subject, and in America the great name of Albert Pike can be cited in support of it. After every allowance has been made for the position of such a speculation, still almost inextricable, it can at least be affirmed that here alone is the repose of all speculations, because it harmonises all. It accounts at once for the claims of Hermeticism, Rosicrucianism, and for the presence of these and other elements of a mystical character in the symbolism and the legends of the Fraternity, as well as for the bond of sympathy which, from the seventeenth century and onward, has always, or at least until recent times, subsisted between Masons and the purely mystical societies, and which did, at one period, develop, during a succession of years, a most striking series of results, as we shall see in its proper place later on. Among the Masonic symbols which have been identified by Pike as possessed by Freemasons in common with the Hermetic and Alchemical literatures are the Square and Compass, the Triangle, the Oblong Square, the legend of the Three Grand Masters, the idea embodied in the evasive or replaced word, which may well be the most important of all, together with the Sun, Moon, and Master of the Lodge. It was, moreover, his opinion, based on this and other considerations, that the Philosophers, or, in other words, the members of the Hermetic confraternities, became Freemasons, and introduced into Masonry their own symbolism. He thinks, finally, that Ashmole may probably have become himself a Mason because others who were followers of Hermes had taken the step before him.

Unfortunately, it is very nearly impossible in the existing state of our knowledge to set forth even the outlines of the hypothesis, because the connecting links are throughout wanting. If it is worth while to record any personal opinion which I may be disposed to hold upon the subject, it may be said that at no distant period of time more light is likely to be forthcoming, because the Hermetic literature of the seventeenth century is a natural source from which to expect assistance, and because a concerted attempt to collect this literature, which is still largely in manuscript, may well be made by the few who now feel that importance attaches to the issue. Even then the new knowledge will come rather from analysis of the symbolical documents than from what is understood by historical evidence. Much also will depend upon new aspects, which may shortly be assumed by what has been well termed the Rosicrucian mystery, and this for the reason that whereas during past investigations reliance has, of necessity, been placed solely upon public documents, it is now known, at least in certain circles, that there are other channels of inquiry from which light may be derived. For the moment, however, it is still possible to deal merely with the outcome of historical research. The influence of the

Rosicrucian Fraternity upon that of the Masons has been questioned in the past only by those who have been unfitted to appreciate the symbolism which they possess in common. The nature of the influence is another matter, and one, moreover, in which it might well be necessary to recognise up to a certain point the working of the simple principle of imitation. The influence has been exercised more especially in connection with the high grades, and as to these it is wholly impossible, for example, to question that those who instituted the eighteenth degree of the Scottish Rite must either have received something by transmission from the old German brotherhood, or must alternatively have borrowed from its literature. Outside the high grades there have been writers of consideration, also especially in Germany, who have regarded Freemasonry simply as a final development of the Rosicrucian brotherhood. The first to advance this hypothesis was Nicolai of Berlin, a bookseller of some literary eminence, in the year 1782. He was followed by Buhle without much in the way of acknowledgment as to the claims of his predecessor. Mr. Gould has recently said that the theories of both are dead, but this is true only of the specific complexion which was given them, and he himself would, no doubt, be among the first to recognise, and does, indeed, acknowledge implicitly, the likelihood of the influence which is here under consideration. More than a century prior to the epoch of the German writers—that is to say, in the year 1638—Henry Adamson, described by Mr. Gould as a citizen of Perth, published a metrical account of that city, in which are the following lines:—

> 'For we are Brethren of the Rosie Cross,
> We have the Mason Word and Second Sight.'

I do not know whether Mr. Gould altogether appreciates the significance of this quotation, which is one of the earliest references to the Rosicrucian Society found in the English language. It is assuredly the first occasion on which that Fraternity and Masons are, so to speak, bracketed together, and in this connection it is necessary to remember that the first rumour concerning the Rosicrucians does not go back much further than the year 1615. The informal connection instituted by the verses can scarcely be regarded as evidence except of that connection as it was made in the mind of the writer, but even from this point of view it is not without significance. It was several years subsequently, namely in 1652, that the Rosicrucian manifestoes were first translated into English, and it was slightly prior to this time that Elias Ashmole was received into the Fraternity of Freemasons. That he was previously connected with the Rosicrucians themselves, or otherwise with the representatives of some association which had assumed their name, is quite clear from his life. His antiquarian studies led him more especially in the direction of alchemy, but in respect of this art he was not merely an antiquary, not merely a collector of ancient documents on the subject; he was to some extent one of its practical students. In this aspect of his studies he was also not simply an isolated inquirer. He had secured that assistance which, in the Hermetic Art, has always been regarded as essential, namely, the instruction of a Master, and this Master was one Backhouse, of whom few particulars are forthcoming in public beyond his asserted Rosicrucian connections. Ashmole was otherwise associated with all the occult philosophers, whether mystics, alchemists, or astrologers, belonging to his own period. The suggestion that he acted as an instrument of the Rosicrucian Society, or as a member thereof, in the transfiguration of operative Freemasonry, is of faith for those who hold it rather than a matter of evidence, but if such a design existed at the period he was in no sense an unlikely person. It has been affirmed further, in the interests of the claim which has been advanced concerning him, that a meeting of the Alchemical Order took place in London, and in a hall which was used regularly for Masonic conventions; that Ashmole and his brother Rosicrucians, perceiving how operative Masons were already outnumbered in membership by persons of education not belonging to the craft, but who had been admitted within the ranks, believed that the time was ripe for a complete ceremonial revolution, and that one founded on mystic traditions was actually drawn up in writing, constituting the first grade approximately as it now exists. The grade of Fellow Craft was elaborated in 1648 and that of Master in the year 1650. It is needless to say that this is mere speculation, for which even rumour or legend can offer no warrant, and being to this extent idle, it cannot be less than mischievous. If there were Rosicrucians in England, if Backhouse was actually a Rosicrucian, it may be presumed that those who, according to his own statement, communicated to Ashmole portions at least of the Hermetic secrets would not have withheld from him the corporate mysteries of their Fraternity; but, on the other hand, there is at present no historical evidence that the Hermetic Order possessed any such corporate existence in England at the period. However this may be, in the memoirs of the life of Elias Ashmole, which were drawn up by himself in the form of a diary, we find the following now well-known entry under date of October 16, 1646:—

'I was made a Freemason at Warrington, in Lancashire, with Colonel Henry Mainwaring, of Kartichan, in Cheshire; the names of those that were then at the lodge: Mr. Richard Penket, Warden, Mr. James Collier, Mr. Richard Sankey, Henry Littler, John Ellam, Richard Ellam, and Hugh Brewer.' The fact that no Master was present has probably been noted by scholars, and may have been particular to a loose observance on the occasion, but more probably it was characteristic of the Rite as then administered.

At this period Elias Ashmole was under thirty years of age; his father was a saddler by trade, his mother was the daughter of a draper, he himself solicited in Chancery; but while still in his youth he tells us that he had entered into that condition which he had always desired: 'That I might be enabled to live to myself and studies, without being forced to take pains for a livelihood in the world.' The admission of such a person into the trade union of the Masons is scarcely required as a proof that the practice of initiating men of other, and even of no professions obtained at the period, but it may just be noted that here, as in many cases of earlier date, the reception was in the capacity of a simple brother, and not of a patron. The practice itself was not actually legalised within the order until 1703, but there is nothing whatever in the diary of Ashmole to indicate that the occurrence was unusual in character, or that he was in any sense specially favoured.

The nature of those studies which were engaging Elias

Ashmole about the time of his initiation may be gathered by the publication, five years later, of his *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, which was a collection of poetical pieces written in the English language on the subject of the Hermetic Mystery of the Philosopher's Stone. So far as can be judged, the contents of the work in question are concerned simply with the material transmutation of metals, and not with those spiritual mysteries which are occasionally supposed to have been concealed under the external pretence of alchemy. At the same time Ashmole is careful to explain his own knowledge that the transmutation of metals was only a branch of the Hermetic practice: 'As this is but a part, so it is the least share of that blessing which may be acquired by the Philosopher's *materia*, if the full virtue thereof were known. Gold, I confess, is a delicious object, a goodly light which we admire and gaze upon *ut pueri in Junonis avem*, but as to make gold is the chief intent of the Alchemists, so was it scarcely any intent of the ancient Philosophers and the lowest use the Adepti made of this *materia*. For they, being lovers of wisdom more than worldly wealth, drove at higher and more excellent operations, and certainly he to whom the whole course of nature lies open rejoiceth not so much that he can make gold and silver or the devils be made subject to him, as that he sees the heavens open, the angels of God ascending and descending, and that his own name is fairly written in the Book of Life.'

Outside the symbolism of its language some interesting points may be gathered from this citation. The Stone of the Philosophers was not actually a stone, the powder of transmutation was not actually and atomically a powder. In the last resource, these were veils made use of by the adepts, though without denying the material existence of certain renovating and transmuting substances available to the philosophers in the lower branches of their art. Elsewhere Ashmole himself distinguishes four species of so-called Philosophical Stone—mineral, vegetable, magical, angelical—though this is possibly an allegory under which he indicates the four chief processes of secret science. The first is concerned with the supposed development and perfection of metallic substances; the second deals with the concealed possibilities of plants and animals, showing what virtues and what undeveloped capacities reside in each; the third is, in modern language, the science of lucidity, vision at a distance, and so forth. The fourth is a divine, celestial, and invisible power by which the mysteries of the angelical world were supposed to be revealed, and the gift of dream and prophecy conferred upon the possessor. In other words, it seems reasonable to infer that Ashmole was acquainted, at least by repute and at a distance, with those higher ends of initiation which have been set forth in these papers. With regard to the practice, he says: 'I must confess I know enough to hold my tongue but not enough to speak, and the no less real than miraculous virtues I have found in my diligent inquiry into the arcana lead me to such degrees of admiration, they command silence, and force me to lose my speech.'

It will be seen that the Ashmole hypothesis is really only a part and parcel of the greater claim of Rosicrucian influence on the development of emblematic Freemasonry. I have recorded and agreed with the opinion that in so far as this claim has been advanced in the past, it must now be regarded as lapsed: it has passed away from that phase in which the German brotherhood was originally supposed to have transfigured itself into Masonry, or, alternatively, to have revolutionised Masonry for its own purposes, into the more reasonable suggestion that the operative brotherhood came gradually and not unnaturally under the influence of persons who belonged to both associations, and it is rightly considered as an Hermetic rather than an exclusively Rosicrucian influence. This is a distinction which is not entirely appreciated by those who are acquainted only at second-hand with the mystical movement of the seventeenth century. With the older views upon the subject there lapses another claim which in certain circles is still regarded favourably. The greatest Rosicrucian apologist of the seventeenth century was Robert Fludd, whom I have mentioned already, and serious inquirers have sought to connect him not only with the German Fraternity but with the transition of operative into emblematic Freemasonry by the admixture of Rosicrucian doctrine therewith. The considerations on which this opinion has been grounded are extremely slender in their character. Indeed I know of no more substantial foundation than the fact that Fludd in the later years of his life lived, as he also died, in Coleman Street, close to the Masons' Hall, and that in the year 1660 an inventory of the Company's goods, taken before the fire of London, has the following entry: 'Item 1, Book of the Constitutions that Mr. Fflood gave.' Much has been done recently to elucidate and to furnish a succinct account of the voluminous writings of the Kentish mystic, but the last conclusion of his latest interpreter, the Rev. J. B. Craven, is that which has been reached previously by early first-hand students of his Latin works, namely, that there is no evidence for his alleged Masonic connections.

Such in rough outline is the case as it stands for the interference of the Hermetic schools in Freemasonry, as apart from the now exploded hypothesis which connected the brotherhood by a direct transmission from antiquity within their own bonds. I have registered my feeling that some day it may assume a less uncertain aspect; in other words, that sources of additional knowledge may possibly become available in the future. It is even now more than a matter of simple persuasion. Independently of this, there is also much to be done in the purely historical field, but, unfortunately, the speculation in England has only a few sympathisers, and among these a small proportion only who are qualified to work therein. In France I have already indicated that the Ashmolean hypothesis is practically the accepted explanation by those who are at the pains to seek for any, but it has been so far in uncritical hands which have sought to erect speculations that are merely entitled to tolerance into historical theses which cannot be called in question. Thus the president of the Martinist Order in Paris has found it possible to state with authority as certain facts:—1. That Freemasonry was established in England by members of the Fraternity of the Rose Cross, who were solicitous to create a centre for the protection and the recruiting of their order. 2. That the earliest Masonic lodges were of a composite character, in part constituted of operative craftsmen and in part of men of understanding imbued with these ulterior motives. 3. That the Rosicrucian connection with Masonry began unquestionably through Ashmole. The enunciation of empirical suppositions in this language of certitude is by no means the way that an obscure or debated subject can be either elucidated or upheld.

In their higher aspects the schools of so-called transmutation were mystic orders, not simply associations for the pursuit of an occult science. The purpose of the greater initiation was within their purview, and the end of its experience was the same. In like manner, the Rosicrucian mystery, as we shall again see later on, was the mystery of a divine rebirth, such as we meet with also, but in this case under many veils, in the ceremonial of Masonry. If the representatives of these mystic schools met and mingled with the Masons of the seventeenth century, and if it is about that time that a certain transfiguration took place in the craft, it is a reasonable conclusion that the mystic schools had a hand therein. But if there were no such intercourse, and if no such influence were exercised, it remains, notwithstanding, that Masonry, as stated at the outset, is the *minutum mundum* of that great world of initiation which interpenetrates all history and seems also to lie behind all; that at this day it contains the remanents of the initiatory processes as they have been described in these papers; and this after all is the really important point, however these remanents have been derived thereto.

It follows, therefore, that Masonry can be explained only by that to which it belongs certainly, namely, as a reflection at a far distance of the applied legend of the soul—as a last rumour and echo of the mystic quest. The nature and quality of the connection which is thus established can, on the whole, be elucidated most simply by the Ashmolean hypothesis; at the same time it will be seen that Ashmole is rather a name which stands for an idea; his particular interference is not a matter of importance, but he represents a school, and it is, I think, the interference of the school in question which enables us to understand Masonry. I should add that in all their earlier aspects the Ashmole and cognate explanations call to be relieved from many burdens of folly, among which we may include the suggestion that the third degree was manufactured or remodelled by Ashmole, and him failing, by the group that surrounded him, with a political motive, which motive was to memorise the murder of King Charles I. As to this, there is evidence that an attempt was once made to utilise Masonry in the Jacobite interest, but it occurred later, or subsequently to the period when the celebrated oration of the Chevalier Ramsay gave an impetus to the development of the high grades and created the Templar hypothesis. Here is another subject of research into the obscurities of Masonic history not without its importance, and upon which much remains to be said, but it does not concern us at the moment. Ashmole, like Thomas Vaughan and others of the Hermetic School, less or more their contemporaries, is known to have been a Royalist, at least by his sympathies; in so far as he was attached to the Hermetic Tradition he could not well have been otherwise, but his studious and contemplative life would have consorted ill with the political complexion of the time, in which he had no vital concern, and Masonry in its craft degrees has also no such concern—no kingly cause to champion, no party to advance, for it has been called to a higher service—that of the catholic nature of man in the one experience which ultimately belongs to his nature. It is in view of this election and the memorials thereof as we now find them reflected, and, if we must needs say it, fossilised, in the craft degrees, that it is possible for us to subscribe within limits, but with something approaching cordiality, to at least one instinct of conventional scholarship and criticism—I mean to that which rejects once and for all the larger proportion of the high degrees as unessential to Masonry when they are not an embarrassment thereof, as a romantic decoration when they are not actually a disfigurement. It remains, notwithstanding, that over and above the three craft degrees and over above all the great and wonderful legend of the third degree, we have to look elsewhere for the completion of the Masonic experiment, because the craft, as it stands, with all its powers of reflection, does not contain the fulfilment of the mystic experience. We must look also beyond that further light which is supposed to reside in the ceremonial of the Royal Arch, but the precise location of the vital supplement which is requisite cannot be indicated here, though it is certainly to be sought within and not without the ranks of the Fraternity.

RUMOURS OF THE MYSTIC QUEST

WHILE it is conceivable that the ends of the mysteries might, in the opinion of the wardens of the mysteries, be served in some ordered fashion by the appropriation of the mechanism of a trade guild, it is not conceivable that a trade guild, as such, either in its outward history or its inward archives, can be of interest from the standpoint of the mysteries, and we must therefore be prepared to find that for some considerable period after the alleged absorption, and its coincident transmutation of a practical craft into a speculative science, there is very little to attract us in the early records of the Masonic Fraternity. They are incapable of decoration; they lend themselves in no wise to the formulæ of literary expression; they show forth and signify nothing. That a few of the Scottish lodges—Edinburgh, Glasgow, Kilwinning, or Scone and Perth—possess early records is interesting, as it is also important, but it does not really help us towards an elucidation of Masonry, considered as a system of initiation which contains and summarises the whole process of the mysteries, nor are the records at their proper valuation of sufficient importance to make the historical side clear, so that neither alternative offers any finality. The history of lodges as such, regarded simply, the minutes of their meetings, the rolls of their members, are useful in their own degree, but can effect little towards these greater considerations. It would be out of place, under any circumstances, and is for this reason unnecessary, to enter seriously upon what would be called the history of the craft degrees. I have shown that the whole business of the Fraternity has been theoretically associated with those institutions of the past which are believed to have dispensed initiation at various places and times, and that something is still expected in the mode of elucidation from the Hermetic schools of the seventeenth century in England, from those more especially which were influenced by the aspirations and ideals of the German Rosicrucian Fraternity. It remains to be indicated that, at least during one period, and in more than one country, the history of Freemasonry was identical with that of a signal movement which involved a revival of imputed mysticism. I can do little more than offer, outside all special research, a preliminary sketch of what is actually a very large subject, but it will serve to put the reader on a basis of elementary acquaintance with the available body of materials; and as much of the information is accessible with a little research, it will rest for him at his need to extend it further.

Let it be assumed, in the first place, that anterior to the middle of the seventeenth century the history of Freemasonry is impossible for want of adequate material, while after that date its history is without real philosophical interest except in two countries of Europe. There is no doubt that it exercised an immense influence upon France during that century of quakings and quickenings which gave birth to the great Revolution, transformed civilisation in the West, and inaugurated the modern era. Without being a political society, it was an instrument eminently adaptable to the subsurface determination of political movements. At a later date it may have contributed to the development of Germany, as it did certainly to the creation of Italy, but the point and centre of Masonic history for the purpose of the present inquiry is France in the eighteenth century. To that country also, though in a lesser sense to Germany, is practically confined the historical connection between Masonry and mystic knowledge, for the revival of mysticism, which originated in Germany at the close of the sixteenth century and thence passed into England, found its final field, under many limitations, in France at the period in question. There Rosicrucians reappeared, there Anton Mesmer restored and made public the elementary process of transcendental practice, there the Marquis de Puséygur discovered clairvoyance, there Martines de Pasqually instructed his disciples in the mysteries of ceremonial magic, there the illustrious Saint-Martin, *le philosophe inconnu*, elaborated his philosophy of spiritual reintegration, there the central doctrines of the inward life took possession of some important minds within the fold of the Gallic Church; there alchemy flourished, there both spiritual and political princes betook themselves to the search after the elixir of life; there also, as we have otherwise seen already, rose up a line of magnificent impostors who posed as initiates of the occult sciences, as possessors of the great secret and the grand magisterium; there, finally, under the influence of transcendental philosophy, the higher mysteries of emblematic Masonry took root and grew and flourished, developing a thousand splendours of symbolic grades, of romantic legends, of sonorous names and titles. In a word, the quixotic side of all European mysticism concentrated its forces at Paris and Lyons, and all French mysticism gathered under the shadow of the square and compass.

The year 1714 is sometimes regarded as the approximate date on which symbolic Freemasonry, having passed through its obscure period, became a matter of more public knowledge and profession. The Grand Lodge of London was instituted in 1717, and it was thence, as from a centre, that the principles of the new science, or, otherwise, of the old science newly brought to light, were propagated among the nations of the world. Between this lodge and the headquarters of the so-called Ancient Masons at York, it is well known that there was a bitter struggle, amidst which all real traces of the building guild were effaced by its philosophical daughter. Within the few years preceding 1725 the ethical doctrine and mystery had spread into Germany, Holland, Belgium, Spain, and even America. The first French lodge, that of Brotherhood and Friendship, is said to have been founded at Dunkirk in 1721. Four years later Freemasonry possibly established itself at Paris, but it was not till 1743, and there is then considerable uncertainty, that a regular lodge, endowed with a constitution under authority from the English Grand Lodge, was instituted in that city. With the subsequent growth of the Fraternity we have no direct business. It suffered and survived persecutions. In 1756 the Grand Lodge of France was founded. Then new grades, new legends, new titles and dignities sprang confusedly into being, and amidst much internal distraction and amidst many grievous divisions, the pressure of civil authority succeeded in suspending its official existence for the space of four years. In 1771 the Grand Lodge was reassembled under the auspices of the Duc de Luxembourg, and, twelve months later, it experienced a final transfiguration into the Grand Orient of France.

During all this period so much of the mystic element as would perhaps have been tolerated at the period had been fermenting slowly but surely within the ranks of the French brotherhood. The three fundamental degrees which are attributed in France, as we have seen, to Elias Ashmole, in spite of their obvious analogies with the grades of antique initiation, seemed insufficient to keep alive in Freemasons the purposes for which they were designed; in England the symbolic architecture lost all connection outside the domain of ethics; while every school of the mystics which flourished in France established supplementary rites for the Masonic propagation of their peculiar doctrines and objects. The modern literature of the Fraternity, in dealing with these sects, sternly resents their innovations, and, in many cases, with justice; but some of them, at least, must be credited with defined philosophical intentions, subject to all their limitations. What remained were the accidents of fashion, meaningless and pretentious enough; but as they were never, on any consideration, a part of Masonry, so there is neither reason that they should now detain us nor that we should be distressed by their fatuity, though it is not less than true that the period beheld innovations without number which were begotten of individual ambition and vanity. A few also would appear to have been developed out of an inexhaustible passion for pompous titles, and had no design beyond the possession and dispensation of magnificent but empty dignities.

The mystic development of the Fraternity in France of the eighteenth century can be said truly to have exhausted all branches of that which may be technically described as occult science. How far these sciences connect with the true object of research in mysticism, and therefore with the concealed and spiritual end of the greater initiation, has been, perhaps, sufficiently set forth in previous papers, and there is no need to say that the developments now mentioned, or the grades and orders which represent them, are in many cases open to the charge of frivolity, and that, as such, they did as little to secure and advance their own interests as to promote those of Masonry. The most insignificant, notwithstanding, has here an extrinsic importance because of the impulse which actuated it, and in this respect I could wish that there were space available to give some account of them all. Broadly speaking, they may be distinguished into two classes, of which the first would include the rites less or more avowedly established for the purpose of transforming Masonry, either partially or wholly, in the interests of some scheme of transcendentalism; while in the second would be comprised those less ambitious systems which, though they interpreted Masonry in accordance with their particular schools of thought, were content to pursue their objects under the protection of the craft. This classification will serve also—though again I am speaking broadly—the purposes of another distinction, for as the rites of the first section were usually distributed over a long series of grades, so they represented a general rather than a specific occult or mystic propaganda; while into the second section those fall naturally which were concerned with one or other of the given sciences of transcendentalism. All these sciences were, as I have said, represented. The Rite of the Illuminati of Avignon, founded in 1785; the Academy of the Ancients and of the Mysteries, which dates from 1767; the Knights of the True Light, founded in Austria about 1780; the Academy of True Masons, instituted at Montpellier in 1778; the Knights and Brethren of Asia, which appeared in Germany in 1780; the Order of Jerusalem, said to have originated in America, but more probably a continental system dating from 1791, are all examples of Fraternities claiming connection with Masonry, which were devoted, or that at least more especially, to the pursuits of alchemy. The Society of the Universal Aurora, established at Paris in 1783; the Order of Harmony, also founded in 1783; and the Philanthropical Society, Stockholm, 1789, propagated the doctrines of Animal Magnetism in connection with Masonry. Other associations, the names of which it is scarcely necessary to enumerate, prosecuted astrology, Kabalism, and even ceremonial magic. The more general tenets of an unaccredited mysticism were taught in connection with the

Rectified Rose Cross of Schrœder, from 1766 and onwards, by the Illuminated Theosophists of Chastanier, and the Academy of the Sublime Masters of the Luminous Ring. Some of these associations were ephemeral, a few only outlived the century of their origin, and of all indifferently it will be readily understood that, though requiring Masonic qualifications from their candidates and possessing a Masonic complexion in their symbols and ceremonies, they were more properly institutions arising out of the craft, technically connected, but actually independent thereof. The most obvious case in point is the last Reformation of the alchemic Rosicrucian Order in 1777.

At least, by the nature of their claims, it was otherwise with the associations belonging to the first section—with the Order of the Elect Cohens or Rite of Pasqually; with that of the Philalethes; and, since it is necessary to include it, with the Egyptian Masonry which was propagated by Count Cagliostro, and ultimately cost him his liberty, perhaps even his life. These institutions aspired to the reformation of universal Freemasonry; but before considering their pretensions, a word must be said upon the high-grade movement in France, so far as it had proceeded independently of the occult movement—assuming that such independence can, in the last resource, be definitely affirmed.

For the purposes of so slight a sketch as is here possible, the Templar hypothesis of the Chevalier Ramsay may be regarded as the point of departure in respect of the high grades and the Rite with which he is somewhat tentatively connected as their fountain-head. That other influences were also at work, and that certain degrees now classified under this general title may have antedated Ramsay, are grave contentions, the claims of which must, however, be passed over with the simple admission that something may have been derived to him, but he is probably the parent, as we now know them, of the Scottish and chivalric systems. In addition to the three craft degrees, his ascribed institution embodied those of Scottish Master and of Novice and Knight of the Temple. We are told that it was repudiated by the Grand Lodge of England, but was received in France, and there can be little question that, although indirectly and remotely, it was tinctured by the theosophic doctrines which the Chevalier

Ramsay would have learned from his religious instructor Pierre Poiret, the well-known mystic and quietist, and through him from Antoinette de Bourignon, as with that also which he might have derived subsequently from Fénelon, and which took him into the Catholic Church. In this way the gates of Masonry were, perhaps, left ajar for the mystics, who were not long in laying claim to that which, by all its signs and marks, must in some undeclared manner have belonged to them of old.

From the Rite of Ramsay the Templar legend, with some transformation of its ritual, was taken over by the Chapter of Clermont, founded in 1754 by the Chevalier de Bonneville; upon the three craft degrees it superposed three degrees of chivalry.

From the ashes of the Chapter of Clermont there arose, in the year 1758, the Council of the Emperors of the East and West, its scheme of initiation being divided into twenty-five grades. From a previous Sovereign Council of Excellent Masons, about which we know little, it is thought to have borrowed a portion of its terminology. It was not, in itself, mystical, though the periods of initiation were regulated by mystical numbers, and a Mason who had attained his term in the lodges of the Council was supposed to have penetrated the Mysteries of the Mystical Rose. But as the Chapter of Clermont gave birth to the Council of Emperors, so that institution, by a process of segregation, originated the opposing Sovereign Council of the Knights of the Orient, and the ritual of this body was furnished by Baron Tschoudy, a disciple of Paracelsus, and an earnest alchemist of his age, though perhaps of the literary rather than of the practical kind. At the present day the *Chevalier d'Orient* constitutes the fifteenth degree in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, and it was included as the sixth in the French Rite.

With the Council of the Knights of the East the work of this Alchemical Mason was by no means ended. In 1766 he instituted the order of the Burning Star—*L'Étoile Flamboyante*—and developed in its legend the hypothesis that the traditions of alchemy passed from the Jewish ascetics of the Thebaid to the Christian orders of chivalry, and were propagated under the disguise of Freemasonry. To the fruitful mind of Baron Tschoudy, ever occupied in plotting mysterious systems, and in propagating his Hermetic knowledge, Masonry was also indebted for *La Maçonnerie Adonhiramite*, in thirteen grades. Baron Tschoudy was a Catholic by faith, and some Masonic writers have on this ground supposed that he was a Jesuit emissary.

That which was performed by the author of *L'Étoile Flamboyante* in the interests of alchemy had been previously attempted in the interests of theurgy and Kabalism by Martines de Pasqually, founder of the sect of Illuminés, from which Martinism was afterwards developed. He was long supposed to have been born in Portugal, of Jewish origin, about the year 1715, but he was actually of Spanish nationality, and was no doubt originally a Catholic. He claimed to be the heir of an esoteric scriptural tradition, and he established successively in the Masonic lodges at Marseilles, Toulouse, Bordeaux, and, finally, at Paris and Lyons a species of sacerdotal initiation, or genuine and exclusive Masonry, which was termed *Rit des Élus Coëns*, or of elected priests or hierarchs. This propaganda is by some said to have begun in the year 1754, and it continued till the year 1775, after which it was transformed insensibly into the sect of the Martinists, and created quite unofficially a large number of *philosophi*. Its object was the regeneration of man, his return to primordial innocence, and to the enjoyment of those privileges which he had forfeited in the Adamite lapse. The original brethren are said to have been chosen with the utmost caution, and they made profession of a mystical religion. The meetings were devoted to mysterious practical exercises which were described in occult terminology as the manifestation of certain active energies belonging to another intellectual order, but produced by the way of sense. Under this vague veil of language it is easy to recognise that the operations were theurgic in character, and included the evocation of spirits.

Martines de Pasqually was summoned to the Island of St. Domingo, and his work, in a sense, was continued by Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, whom he had initiated at Bordeaux, about the year 1765. Saint-Martin was a born mystic of extremely individual type; the transcendental knowledge of God and the immersion of consciousness in Deity were the ends to which he aspired; he forsook the evocations of his master, while admitting the utility of the experience at the beginning of the mystic life. Having referred to him outside Masonic connections, I need only say here that he shrank from phenomenal manifestations, not that he was especially afraid of their technical dangers, but because they obscured the higher objects, and substituted an inferior and illusory form of knowledge for a veritable and positive science. After the departure of Pasqually he is thought to have reformed the Rite of Elected Cohens, and, in either case, he preached his spiritual philosophy with a certain success at Paris. It was at this period that the name of Martinists was adopted, but it represented a mystical sect or school and no longer a Rite of Masonry. It is said to have extended into 'the principal cities of France, Germany, and even Russia.' Saint-Martin was of a noble family; he entered the army in his youth, and, according to one account, he received the cross of St. Louis for some unrecorded military services. He was an adventurer in no sense; he sought and reaped no profit from his philosophical propaganda; he did not desire distinction; he passed early into a philosophical retirement, calling himself *le philosophe inconnu*, devoting his existence to establishing a new departure in the literature of mysticism, and to his own spiritual advancement. His books have been translated into several European languages, and they are entitled to a decisive place in the history of philosophy. Those who are acquainted with his posthumous correspondence, if they possess the required insight, will be able to trace his progress up to a high point, and may be tempted to believe that he realised, intellectually at least, the true end of esoteric initiation.

The Rite of Martinism still exists in Germany, France, and England, but in a modified form. Its connections with Masonry are now few and unimportant, but about the year 1770, under the influence of Pasqually, the antecedent association of the Elect Cohens formally claimed to communicate the true secrets of the Masonic Fraternity, and it characterised the prevailing systems of the period as apocryphal. The catechisms of its degrees have been published, and they establish sufficiently the true nature of its claims, which the unexpected death of the founder seems to have brought summarily to a close.

The Rite of the Philalethes, which is the second of our three chief claimants to a general reformation of Masonry, connects, on the one hand, with that of Martines de Pasqually, and, on the other, with that which has been already mentioned as the Rite of the Illuminati of Avignon, instituted in 1760 by Antoine Joseph Pernety, a monk of the Benedictine Order, whose life was devoted to the practice of mystic asceticism and to experiments of an alchemical nature. He was an art critic, an extensive traveller, a writer on ethics, and, though at one time a member of one of the most strict of Catholic monastic institutions, he could appreciate the genius of Swedenborg, and he translated a portion of his alleged revelations from the unseen world. But he was, before all things, an erudite commentator on the terminology of the Hermetic philosophy, and he interpreted, with some subtlety for his period, the fables of classical mythology in the interests of the *Magnum Opus*. He founded a Hermetic Society, which seems to have been distinct from and anterior to his Masonic sect. The Illuminati of Avignon were known also as the Brethren of the Rite of Pernety, and when the headquarters were removed to Montpellier they assumed the title of the Academy of True Masons. This is said to have been compounded from the systems of several mystical and Masonic Fraternities, marrying the theosophical mysteries of Swedenborg to the visions of the Apocalypse, and assimilating the mystical elements which existed in the Association of the Two Eagles, the Black Brothers, and the Illuminati of the Zodiac. In the course of time it underwent other transformations, one of its divisions being termed the Chapter of the Knights of the Golden Fleece, a reference which will be intelligible to those who are acquainted with the commentaries of Pernety on the significance of classical fables. It invoked the assistance of Flamel, Philalethes, and other alchemical masters to unveil the fundamental mysteries of occult science. The symbolism of its legends was purely Hermetic, dealing with the Fountain of Trévisan, the tail of the philosophical peacock, the mysteries of pontic water, and other alchemical formulæ. Its subsequent developments and variations were all concerned with departments of esoteric practice.

From the system of Pernety the Rite of the Philalethes derived an interest in alchemy and a certain tincture of Swedenborgian doctrine; from that of Pasqually it derived, in addition to a theurgic complexion, the ambition to effect 'a radical reform in Masonry.' It was founded in 1773 by Savalette de Langes, in conjunction with several prominent Masons, and at one time some twenty lodges seem to have been under its obedience. It attracted to its meetings many of the more cultured mystics, with some of the archæologists of the time, including the illustrious Court de Gebelin, and it was instrumental in organising the Convention of Paris in 1784, at which many princes, prelates, and men of learning are said to have assembled to discuss the true nature of Masonic science, its connection with the occult sciences, and the pretensions of its various rites. The particular Rite of the Philalethes probably acquired at the time some distinction on account of this Convention, but it proved insufficient to support its design for a general Masonic reformation, and though its system was interesting and characterised by more than usual erudition, it passed away, together with its ambition, a short time after the death of its founder, which took place in the year 1788.

The third and most extravagant attempt to transform the system of Masonry, in the interests this time of a spurious species of mysticism, originated a little prior to the Convention of Paris, under the presidency of the so-called Count Cagliostro, who was actually invited to the conferences for the purpose of explaining his claims. The records of his attendance exist in at least two forms, one of which is almost unquestionably spurious, being found in some extremely doubtful memoirs of the archæologist De Gebelin which have been published without credentials in France. But there is otherwise no question as to the claims of the Sicilian magus either in respect of himself or his Masonic system. He passed as the disciple of an alchemist named Althotas, whom some have identified with the theosophist Schrœder, of Germany, and he pretended to have received at the Pyramids of Egypt a full initiation into the 'mysteries of the veritable Grand Orient.' He could make gold and silver; he could renew youth; he could procure for his disciples a resplendent physical beauty; he could evoke the apparitions of the dead; he had lived for two thousand years; he knew all secrets, natural and divine; and he spoke with the inspiration of the wisdom of past ages. His success was unlimited for a moment; he deceived and enchanted the most enlightened and philosophical society in the most philosophical and enlightened country of the world at its highest zenith of cultured unbelief. But it was precisely the scepticism of France which was necessary for the success of Cagliostro. Initiated as a Mason in London, he was an incessant visitor at its various lodges, but the Egyptian Rite which he had invented or acquired was unsuited to the frigid imaginations of the Georgian epoch. In the principality of Courland, at Strasbourg, Bordeaux, and Lyons, he attained, however, an immense, if transient, triumph. But his crowning ambition was 'to inaugurate a mother lodge at Paris, to which Masonry should be entirely subordinate,' and for this purpose he proclaimed himself the bearer of the mysteries of Isis and Anubis from the Far East. He spared no pains; all his plottings and devices were shaped with some reference ultimately to this end. His career has been represented as one of unvaried imposture, but it is precisely one of those cases in which an impartial verdict is very difficult to give. Much of the testimony against him was collected and subsequently made public by the Roman Inquisition, and that is a source from which a sense of historical justice might reasonably demand appeal. In any case, he intoxicated Paris and Strasbourg; he had an illustrious cardinal of the period for his humble admirer, and there is even an astonishing report that the French King, Louis XVI., once notified that any one who molested Cagliostro should be held guilty of treason. It is difficult to take this seriously, but over his Egyptian Freemasonry even Cagliostro was serious. His hostile biographers admit that from a small rogue it transformed him into a magnificent charlatan. In Paris he is said to have established, in the Rue de la Soudière, a private Temple of Isis, of which he constituted himself the high priest.

In 1785 he declared, on the precedent of the initiated priestesses of the Egyptian temples, after which he had modelled his own, that women might be admitted to the mysteries of the Masonic science of the pyramids, and the reception of Madame de Lamballe, with other ladies of exalted rank, took place amidst oriental luxury at the vernal equinox. The

Masonic lodges of Paris looked on in wonder and dismay, and his invitation to their general assembly, to testify concerning himself and his system, was not a matter for surprise. Whether he attended or not, whether it is true or not that he made his attendance contingent on the Rite of the Philalethes passing under the obedience of his system, so far as Cagliostro was concerned the conference came to nothing, and with all its pretensions to the possession of the lost secrets, to the stone of the philosophers, and the great elixir, Egyptian Masonry also came to nothing; it perished or was entombed with its founder in the prisons of the Inquisition. There is little need to add that, so far as we know anything concerning it, the propaganda which Cagliostro undertook in the name of the transcendental sciences, in the names of Hermes and Isis, had no connection with mysticism, unless after the manner of a travesty.

I have said that the chief interest of Masonic history centres in France of the eighteenth century, and the general conclusion that may be drawn from this brief enumeration is that every mystic school which then flourished in France, and onward till the year 1825, found its natural centre in Masonry; to that centre they all gravitated: thence they all worked. There is nothing to show that, in respect of the majority, they endeavoured to revolutionise Masonry in their own interest. The Fraternity naturally attracted all mystics to its ranks, and the development of the mystic degrees took place, and also naturally, as a result of that attraction. In a word, French Masonry was the home of Gallic mysticism, and so far as there was mysticism in Germany, it abode in the lodges of the Brotherhood.

The Rite of the Strict Observance, founded in 1754 by Baron Hunde, was, according to a popular description, devoted to the study of the Kabalah, to the search after the Philosophical Stone, to the invocation of spirits, and to necromancy. It might have been on account of the language of the magical rituals that Latin was the official tongue of the Chapter; but, as a fact, its religion was Catholic, and the chiefs of the lodge are said to have been vested like bishops of the Roman Church. It is probably for these reasons that the Rite of the Strict Observance was thought to have been

Jesuitic in its origin. In reality it conferred some important degrees of chivalry.

The theosophist Schrœder has been called the Cagliostro of Germany, and was actually, as we have seen, the imputed master of Balsamo in the things of occult science. He also invented a Masonic rite in the year 1766; it was established at Marburg under the title of True and Ancient Rose-Cross Masons. Later on he opened at Sarrebourg a lodge that was exclusively devoted to magic and alchemy, which arts were taught progressively in seven grades of initiation. A more curious person was Schrœpfer, who attempted a reformation of the Masonic Order at Dresden, and puzzled all Germany by his perpetual evocations of spirits. Hunde was an enthusiast, but he was also a man of earnest purpose, and not without great lights; of the other reformers both appear to have been impostors, but the Strict Observance and its derivatives is, perhaps, the most interesting of all the high-grade systems worked upon a series of degrees, and its far-reaching influence is not without continental traces of a defined character even at the present day.

The fact that it originated in Germany is sufficient in itself to give that country a title to particular consideration in the Masonic movement as modified by mystic elements. But this is not its only title. There is a mass of unpublished material to prove that about the year 1777 the last transformation of German Rosicrucianism was drawing exclusively on the Fraternity to recruit its own ranks, while other secret associations imbued with kindred aspirations demanded the Masonic qualification from all their candidates. But those which were perhaps the most important are those of which more than the names are now scarcely known. Something in other directions has been attempted to elucidate the mysterious order of the *Fratres Lucis*, or Knights of Light, which about this period were at work in Germany, but the results are still within the domain only of speculation.

There were other interests also developing, and many persons, both mystics and Masons, looked in Germany, as they did also in France, towards Egypt as the cradle of the antique mysteries.

Egypt more than India and far more than Greece, in the days when mysteries flourished, has been regarded as the country of initiation, and the latest results of scholarship in respect of the Book of the Dead create more than a presumption that this volume is actually a book of initiation from which it is still possible to reconstruct some of the grades and degrees, as we should now term them, which were once conferred upon the elect in the land of the Pharaohs. The demonstration, in so far as it has proceeded, is new, but the idea is not new, and these remarks are preliminary to some account of a system of initiation as it was supposed to be practised in Egypt, but really compiled in Germany towards the end of the eighteenth century. It was published at Berlin in 1782, under the title of *Krata Repoa*, or *Initiation into the Ancient Mysteries of the Priests of Egypt.* A second edition was produced in 1789, and it was translated into French by J. M. Ragon, appearing in this form at Paris in 1821. By the few learned persons who have concerned themselves with the question, it has usually been regarded as a series of imaginary grades which were never worked by their devisers, but as to the second point there is room for reasonable doubt, and in respect of the first it is just possible that it has preserved or centralised a few remanents of old traditions outside what it has gathered otherwise, for it is confessedly a combination derived from many sources.

The authors of the German work were Fri Koppen and J. W. B. von Hymmen. C. F. Koppen was a German official, born in 1734, and he died in 1797 or 1798. He was the founder of an association which rose to some celebrity under the name of the African Builders or Architects, and is said to have spent a great deal of his time and means in furthering the work of this order. Outside his connection with the *Krata Repoa*, he wrote an essay on the mysteries designed to explain the true purposes of Freemasonry, and also a work which is still known and once circulated largely under the title of *The Most Secret Mysteries of the High Grades of Freemasonry unveiled, or the True Rose-Croix.* This was in 1776. The African Builders must have been a very interesting association; it was incorporated for the primary purpose of literary culture and intellectual studies, but the names of its degrees seem to hint at more defined objects. Particular

Masonic qualifications were required of members, and it drew into its ranks some of the most distinguished German and French literati of the period. It had branches at Worms, Cologne, and Paris. There is, however, considerable confusion as to its organisation. A connection is asserted between it and the contemporaneous society of Alethophilos or Lover of Truth, which, it should be noted, is the name of one of its own grades. I also suspect some connection with the *Krata Repoa* itself. One distribution of the degrees has been tabulated as follows :—

INFERIOR GRADES

1. Apprentice of Egyptian Secrets.
2. Initiation in Egyptian Secrets.
3. Cosmopolitan or Citizen of the World.
4. Christian Philosopher.
5. Alethophilos or Lover of Truth.

HIGH GRADES

1. Esquire.
2. Soldier.
3. Knight.

At the beginning, therefore, we seem to have an Egyptian interpretation of the mysteries; in the centre the Christian construction of Masonic research; and at the end a series of grades which savour of Templarism. As regards the Alethophilos Degree, I must leave it as I find it, namely, an open question, whether the independent association bearing this name, and said to have been instituted at Berlin in 1736, or two years after the birth of Koppen, was independent of his African Builders or was absorbed thereby. I do not know whether the earlier association possessed a Masonic complexion or demanded Masonic qualifications of its candidates. I should add, however, that another account gives the true names of the grades of the African Builders as follows, and without distinction into inferior or superior classes :—

1. Knight or Apprentice.
2. Brother or Companion.
3. Soldier or Master.
4. Horseman or Knight.
5. Novice.
6. Ædile or Builder.
7. Tribunus or Knight of the Eternal Silence—

all independent of, and, I presume, presupposing the three craft degrees.

So far as regards C. F. Koppen and the African Builders, who seem, like the Strict Observance, to have carried on their proceedings in the Latin language. Concerning J. W. B. von Hymmen, I can only say that he was a Prussian judge who was born in 1725 and died in 1785; he wrote a number of legal works and was a member of the Strict Observance, to which, I may here note, it would seem that we can, in the last resource, trace many of the associations and personalities which most interest us in connection with the present aspect of Masonic researches. I should add that, in 1806, and with Constantinople as the pretended place of publication, but signifying Berlin, there appeared a pamphlet of fifty-one pages, entitled *A Discovery Concerning the System of the Order of African Architects.* And yet the Society in question is supposed to have passed out of existence some ten years after its foundation. It follows from other evidence that Von Hymmen was also a member of the African Architects, and so in like manner was the Baron von Gugomas, who was a celebrated occult personage of his period, not without some fairly strong suspicion of imposture. He addressed a circular to the members of the Strict Observance, inviting them to a convention at Wiesbaden, and pretending to have extraordinary powers from some unknown superiors in Cyprus under the protection of the Holy See, for the purpose of promulgating a pure and authentic Masonry.

Some suppose him to have been a Jesuit, but he was believed in by many distinguished German Masons. In 1786 he is said to have confessed to his Jesuitical connections. Another member of the African Builders was Karl de Bosc, a chancellor of the Prussian court, who is stated to have belonged to the Rosicrucian and other mystic Fraternities. We see, therefore, that the compilers of the *Krata Repoa* were more or less in connection and identification with the occult as well as the Masonic movement of their period.

The term Krata Repoa, which is supposed to be of Egyptian origin, has been thought to signify 'Silence in the mouth of the Almighty One.' The work as it stands is divided into seven grades. That of the Pastophoris, a term which is used by Apuleius to signify a priest of Isis, corresponds to the apprentice who is the keeper of the sacred threshold, and it is the first grade taken by the candidate. It is a degree of natural darkness and probation. It was followed by the degree of Neokoros, characterised by temptations and ordeals. The third grade was the Gate of Death, and the intention of its symbolism recalls closely some of the characteristic features of the Masonic mystery. It was a degree of judgment and of the passage of the soul. The fourth grade was called the Battle of the Shadows, and therein the candidate was restored to light. In the fifth grade a drama of vengeance was enacted, and it has analogies with the Templar degrees in Freemasonry. The sixth was that of the Astronomer before the Gate of the Gods, and herein the mythological pantheon was explained to the initiate and the unity of God was taught. The seventh and final grade was that of the Man acquainted with the mysteries, and in this the whole scheme of initiation was expounded.

I have given considerable space to what may at first sight appear merely as a matter of reconstruction into which invention has largely entered, but I believe that the African Architects are important for the mystic side of Masonic initiation in Germany, and that the *Krata Repoa* will help us to understand the aims and interests of the order in which Koppen and Von Hymmen played an important part.

After the first quarter of the nineteenth century, there is no history of Masonry in its connection with mysticism, for the simple reason that there was practically no mysticism. The progress of physical science and the political condition of nations diverted more and more the attention of intellectual minds from the possibilities of the inward life. Moreover, the lesser subjects of transcendental research were discredited by a multitude of impostures and, by an almost universal agreement, they passed into neglect and contempt. The phenomena of clairvoyance and animal magnetism were the chief witnesses to the secret potencies of humanity during the next two decades. But it may be truly said that mystic science was not dead but sleeping, and the voice which was the herald of its awakening, though in no sense otherwise connected, began to be heard in America in 1848.

THE VEIL OF THE SANCTUM SANCTORUM

I HAVE said something in previous papers concerning the historical side of Masonry in its correspondence with other mysteries, and seeing that in most cases the available facts, or those things for which there is evidence in documents, are rather concerned with the *minima*, I have leaned naturally towards the high speculations, if I may so term them—towards those grades and orders which are held usually to stand apart from the authentic and recognised concerns of Masonry, embodying in some respects matters which were of faith among particular brethren in the past, and at most—but this in rare instances—representing certain derivations from a comparative antiquity, for which, however, the evidence—outside the testimony of the rites—is not to be found in documents. That is to say, they are voices speaking almost behind the veil, and this scarcely otherwise than in the sense of oracles. It is not only through these that Masonry connects with the great past of the mysteries, and indeed the root legends speak with a clear tone, though it is not exactly in a language which is understood by the initiates at large, nor is the bond of consanguinity of that kind which is so unmistakable that none can fail in its recognition. There is, however, one form of sacramentalism which characterises all the orders of initiation, and is found, at least as an implicit, in all grades. It is that which is usually missed, because it is so easy to miss the great things that are not in patent evidence and are not, so to speak, written in the starry heavens. This mystery has already been enunciated in the simple statement that all initiation is concerned with communicating, by the office of symbols, a new life, which is depicted most commonly as a Mystery of Inward Generation. It proclaims, in other words, to every candidate, that 'except a man be born again' he shall not enter—that is, essentially and truly—into the Secret Kingdom of the Rites. There are certainly many lesser orders, assemblies and confraternities which, having little or no inheritance from the past, offer scarcely any trace of that sacramental life which is understood in the idea of rebirth; but the implication to which I have referred is found under very curious conditions, and I am not sure that among all the places of seclusion there is one place where we shall fail to discern it enshrined, though it lies sometimes far below the common plummet of the interpretation of symbols. It is not by this alone, but it is at least by this above all, that all are inter-connected, as by one root belonging to a great tree of concealed life and brotherhood. It is this which makes the mystery of redemption in Christ a great mystery of initiation and advancement; it is this which makes Masonry a mirror not only of all the instituted mysteries which went before it, but of many which have subsisted concurrently, and also the elder sister of some which are still among us, less obvious than she is, but less unconscious on the surface of their proper geniture and pedigree. It is, therefore, in the reconsideration of this doctrine, however indirectly and under all reserves whatsoever, that the last message of these papers on the higher sense of brotherhood can be most simply put forth. It is not by any means essential that we should speak of Masonry apart from, or in preference to, organisms by which it is encircled and into which it is unofficially incorporated; but standing as the pattern for many, it testifies for others besides itself and can be held for the present purpose to include them.

If it were possible to take unexpectedly a census of opinion within the ranks of the Masonic Fraternity on the general subject of rites, and on the place of Masonry among them, I suppose that such opinion, missing the real point at issue, would fall unconventionally into two groups, plus a residuum which numerically would be almost negligible and one which, for the purpose of this brief study, can also be set aside at the moment. The two groups would consist, on the one hand, of those who regard Masonry as complete in the craft degrees, which might or might not include the Holy Royal Arch.

The contrasted section would be much more composite in its character, but its members would be in agreement at least upon one point, and that point the antithesis of the preceding opinion, maintaining, as it is compelled in order to justify its own titles, that the Masonic experiment must be taken further than the admitted limits of the craft before it can be brought to perfection. The issue is in each instance so keen and clear that no intermediate ground or place of adjustment seems possible. There is no intention here of adjudicating upon either view, and they are cited only to put on record that the rites of initiation for the ordinary member of the craft would be really but one rite divided into three degrees, beyond which lies the vast region of fantasy. On the other hand, the advocates of the high grades would multiply them almost indefinitely, according to their particular system, but for these as for those the ideas of initiation and advancement would still lie within the circle, narrow or expanded, of that which they regard as Masonry.

The horizon, then, is to this extent restricted, because the question of the place of Masonry itself among rites understood generically,—supposing, as we must suppose, by the hypothesis of our own speculation, that there are mysteries of initiation and advancement which are outside the bonds of the Fraternity, however extensible,—may be well enough calculated to raise in most minds only a vague wonder. The inevitable inquiry will be: What rites? And behind them, what mysteries? Those who ask it may remember perhaps the ceremonial forms which serve the purposes of external and official religion. They may anticipate that the subsurface intention is to connect Masonry, since it is from the standpoint of this one order that they can alone approach the question, with some system of doctrinal belief. As to this, they will know, or probably, that several authorities in the craft have been disposed to regard Masonic principles as equivalent in their application to such a hallowing of conduct and life as we attribute to religious processes. But there are others, and those indeed whose views are accepted more generally, for whom the basis of Masonry consists, like that of some other systems, wholly in moral conduct, founded, it is true, upon certain doctrines which are the heart and marrow of religion, but raised in their superstructure with sufficient independence to make two fabrics and two institutions, necessarily in harmony, necessarily working together, and yet logically distinct.

There is again no occasion to offer any judgment, however conditional; for no analogy of external religion enters into the present subject; and once more it is mentioned only to liberate the ground from a very natural misapprehension. The questions therefore recur: To what sequence of Rites, accepting the standpoint of the brethren, can Masonry be regarded as belonging? And what Mysteries does the suggestion suppose to underlie all? There are some orders and societies within the ranks of the great order which exist for studies that are designed to reply to these questions, and one can therefore, by the hypothesis at least, address the members of these with a reasonable certainty of being understood, and, if not commanding agreement, may in any case enlist sympathy. Still it is easy, indeed too easy, to overstep the field which is common to interested students who have proceeded a certain distance, and to enter in those regions of specialism and technicality the proper language of which sounds foreign to unaccustomed ears. I would therefore, in the first place, invite the clemency of Masonic, and generally of initiated people, if for those who know more I enumerate things familiar as if they were in a manner abstruse, and if for those who know less I should appear occasionally to exceed the normal measures of apprehension. The gift of speaking or writing in unknown tongues used to be regarded as exceptional, but it seems rather common with the specialist, and he has a luckless habit of lapsing into it unawares. The way of utterance on these subjects in the open face of day is eminently a way of prudence, but, maintaining all reserves, it is still possible, in a general manner, to say something of the Masonic experiment, assuming and not conveying the particular kind of knowledge in which the essence of the Fraternity is enshrined. In the light of the experience which all brethren of all initiations, within and without Masonry, have brought away from all degrees whatsoever, I must ask them then to consider for a moment the idea of rebirth. That is a tradition or a doctrine which may assuredly seem at first to lie apart from the field of the subject, yet it should be known in the connection which I have established under other forms of symbolism, and there is no call that I should put it more clearly. It will be known also by every one, independently of all associations except the great sodality of Christendom, that a most available source of information, and one who is more than a master, has told us that we do not put into the earth that which will come forth out of the earth, but that we sow something which is natural, to reap in due season what is spiritual. It follows also from St. Paul that we sow what is dead, but that we look for something which is alive and will indeed live for ever. Now certain schools of symbolism and several secret orders teach, and have long taught, that some sacred and highly symbolic object, which varies in each Fraternity, once entered into the region of death, with sacramental accessories in the legend of certain rites, whereby the conditions of death and even of disintegration are made indubitable; but that something also issues forth and is found to be alive. It is not exactly the same, for even in the symbolic order a substitution has occurred, and this is really a vital point of the mystery. It may be said, if we prefer, that the mystical remanents of a sacred and solemn object are put into the seclusion and the darkness, and that which is brought forth is the vessel of the reception, which is true according to the symbolism; but the intention of the picture is really more exalted and secret. We should preferably consider that what is remitted into the region of the shadow is more properly the vessel of the reception, and that what comes forth is the sacred object. Let it be remembered that in the great sacramentalisms of Christian doctrine, a place of rest was prepared for One who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with infirmity, after the payment of the last farthing exacted by his enemies, while that which was manifested again upon the third day was manifested as the Lord of Glory. There are certain secret orders on the continent of Europe which, in spite of their comparative antiquity and great historical importance, are unknown, even by name, in England, but in which this mystery is actually represented to the candidate as the final evolution of one important legend. Speaking as a student who, under this or another obedience, holds nearly all the existing rites, I can say, with first-hand knowledge, that, clouded by many veils and under the elusive appearance of almost numberless aspects, the same symbolical intention recurs continually. It does not in respect of the craft, so far as this is concerned in the present thesis, exactly complete the craft, since that, if exhaustively considered, will be found to contain the whole subject, but it interprets it after various manners and often illuminates it newly. It is just perhaps to add, since it will make for historical precision in these abstruse matters, that not only in certain cases is the veiling exceedingly thick, but even the method of expression and the particular materials of the symbolism would suggest that the operation of the conception has been implied rather than patent in the consciousness of some makers of rituals. In other words, they did not quite realise the full significance of that which they were moved to set forth, an experience well known to Saint-Martin, one of the greatest of the French mystics, himself also a Mason, and accredited, correctly or not, with the reconstitution of several grades and orders belonging to his period.

Having attempted to treat the general symbolism of the mysteries, both here and previously, from the standpoint of the idea of rebirth, the next question for consideration is the particular significance which should be attached to this idea so far as modern Fraternities are concerned. In this connection the analogies which I have been led to create with the central mysteries of Christendom, and the interpretation placed on one doctrine by the authority of St. Paul, will naturally suggest that I regard it from what must necessarily be termed a religious standpoint. It would seem, therefore, and this almost indubitably, that I am renouncing categorically the course which I took at the beginning, and am pledging myself to the opinion that after all Masonry, if we must speak more especially of this one Brotherhood, is a matter of religious belief or knowledge rather than a matter of conduct. It is necessary however to distinguish, as happens so invariably in cases of this kind, between questions of instruction, the morality of grades and liturgies, and the content of symbolism. It is impossible, and indeed superfluous, to recite the instructions which are given to candidates at the various stages of their progress through any of the secret orders, or the duties which are definitely imposed on them and with which the least among the members of each sodality will be so entirely familiar. This body of teaching is one thing, and the fact that it is exceedingly valuable is further exhibited by another fact with which also we are unfortunately familiar in all our daily life. I mean to say that if the world at large, or even the mystic world, were guided by the principles of conduct inculcated in the ranks of any one of the Fraternities, the general trend of human history would be almost radically different from anything which it now is. The symbolism of the orders calls for, however, and will repay consideration, apart from any instituted system of moral teaching, which, vital as it is otherwise in its character, contains nothing of the nature of a mystery; and we have seen, I think, quite clearly that by the essence of things there can be nothing which is secret or peculiar about it. The concealed part of Masonry, for example, may of course be regarded as consisting in the fact of its externals, in the methods of communication by which Masons are accustomed to recognise each other, and so forth; but these at most are only the accidents and conventions, and it is an open knowledge with every one that in many cases they have been betrayed times out of number. The true secret is concerned entirely with the symbolism, and this is why one school of interpretation has in the past gone so far as to say, and not without justification, that the mysteries are not taught openly even in the orders themselves. What happens actually is that certain keys are put into the hands of the brethren, as each initiate in his turn passes through the successive grades; and it is for him, if he is able, to open the Temple into which they may or do give entrance. Perhaps this is equivalent to saying that there may be good brethren innumerable in the craft and the other orders for whom the higher significance of their mystery has, by the constitution of their minds, remained almost sealed; but in any case the assumption that the symbolism is really concerned with subjects which are of the first importance, and indeed of the only importance to humanity, understood both within and without the fleeting experience of an earthly life, will inevitably mean that it must connect with religion, since religion is also concerned with the same subject. I suppose it may be taken for granted that there are many good men in the world for whom the conception of an immortal life and whatsoever is implied in the idea of a resurrection from the dead, together with that of a Personal Deity, have ceased practically to be any motive of conduct. Now, as a working system of ethics independently of these doctrines seems entirely possible, it would follow that if Masonry, for example, consisted, as to its essence, wholly in the practice of charity among brethren, then a Fraternity without the Grand Architect of the Universe, and without any horizon opened out by the idea of another life, might well enough correspond to the lower notion of a Masonic brotherhood. The fact that these doctrines are an essential condition of membership is something more than a presumption that the essence of initiation is not contained within the limits of any principle of conduct, since ethics are not the *Summum Bonum*, nor the totality of all forces at work in the development of man, nor actually the perfect way, though they are the gate of the way of perfection. It is further certain that the Biblical idea of resurrection, on which certain orders seem to lay stress exclusively, is only one aspect, and that accidental at best, of the conception of another life. The belief underlying these degrees would seem indubitably of the spiritual kind, and once transformed from the old tradition countenanced, under many reserves, by primeval Christianity, to the wider and deeper conception of the spiritual life, we may be led to conclude that, properly interpreted, the real doctrine current in the schools of initiation does not concern material resurrection, but rather spiritual rebirth. It is also in this way that it enters into that much wider sequence of rites the existence of which is suggested by the title of this essay. In respect of this there was a world before the modern schools, as there was a world before the Flood. I mean to say that the doctrines and the knowledge which are now enshrined in this or that order, as by a final transfiguration of symbols, were in older days contained, as we have seen, in certain mysteries of the past, some records of which have been happily preserved to us and can be disentangled, in spite of inherent imperfections and many corruptions. They appear then as now to be concerned always with the symbolism of mystic death, and in this connection I may mention that, almost as far back as human history goes in one particular direction, we find traces of rites worked in Samothrace, where the candidate was brought for the purposes of initiation into the presence of the gods, and was there slain by the gods. It will seem at first sight that this was a kind of mystery which even the enthusiastic disciple would have been disposed to avoid, at that as indeed at any other period; but, in the light of all which we know concerning the later orders, we shall of course interpret the episode wholly in a symbolical manner, and shall understand readily enough that the recipient was passing through an experience of symbolical death, subsequently to which he also experienced rebirth. The moving symbolism of Egyptian wisdom in 'The Book of the Dead,' about which I am not in any sense competent to speak, operates in the same direction, for we know that at the end of the mysteries the dead also came forth alive. The records of Greek mysteries are equally express upon this subject as the symbolical term of initiation. We gather from many sources the importance which was always attached to them, and the wonderful illumination which, after some secret manner, was communicated, *ex hypothesi*, to the epopts.

Perhaps from one point of view the descent from the mysteries of Egypt into those of the classical world is like the descent of the soul into material things; but at least, according to the accepted tradition, Greece derived from Egypt, nor that at so great a distance, and carefully as its mysteries were concealed by those whom we believe to have passed through their chief grades, the fullest evidence remains in Plato, Plotinus, and others in the chain of philosophy, that such wisdom as inhered in the higher understanding of Greek mystic thought is identical as to its term with all that we can derive from ancient Egypt. I am writing of necessity as shortly as possible of these countries and periods to avoid undue repetition, and the subject-matter is scarcely within the horizon of conventional scholarship, which, in things Egyptian, is without any knowledge of symbols. Coming down to later times, and to the Christian dispensation, we find strange literatures which seem after their own manner to transmit from those who went before them a part of the same traditions, and to indicate concealed somewhere in the world the analogical aspects of identical knowledge. It is more than easy to err in investigations of this kind and to discern over-readily in mystic books something deeper than perhaps they were ever intended to convey. For example, there has been, both in this country and elsewhere, much idle speculation as to the real purpose behind such intellectual puzzles as the literature of Alchemy. Some exponents of this concealed art have been disposed to regard it as concerned exclusively with the experience of the soul in its progress, and have said that what took place in the alembics—themselves symbolic—of the philosophers was not the conversion of base metals and their reproduction in the perfect form of gold, but, on the contrary, that human nature was transmuted therein into a condition that, so far as its form permitted, became akin to divine nature. The lessons of the history and the fuller understanding of the literature are really in another direction, and there is no doubt at this day, among those most qualified to judge, that, at least in its primary aspects, Alchemy was a chemical experiment. It will be a matter of astonishment to most persons that there should be any need to establish a point which is to all appearance so obvious. The researches of M. Berthelot, who has published for the first time the *Byzantine Alchemists*, have read any alternative view a rather remarkable lesson, which so far none of his readers have appreciated. He has traced the undoubted metallic experiments of the Græco-Alexandrian period right through mediæval times, and has created thereby at least one very strong presumption as to the express objects of the art in connection with those great names which are familiar to the students of the subject. There will be no need to add that with any other point of view he, as a scientist, was quite naturally unacquainted. All this notwithstanding, the truth seems to lie rather in a middle ground, and the literature justifies us in regarding the experiment of Alchemy as to some extent twofold in its character; that is to say, in part it was a secret mystery of science, but in part also the symbolism of that science was pressed into the service of another order of experiment; and those who have regarded the soul, its phases and developments, as the particular object of research have not been far astray in respect of certain schools. The subject has, unfortunately, been too long in the hands of persons who understood neither material Alchemy nor the term of mystic thought, and it calls for adequate treatment under other auspices. Here I can only say that there came a time when the metallic experiments had fallen into great disrepute, and when there was an increasing predominance, by the evidence of the literature, of that transcendental object to which I have alluded. Writers like Khunrath seem to have concerned themselves wholly with the latter, and when Jacob Boehme came forward to interpret the Secret Mysteries of Religion, he used largely the terminology and the symbolism of Alchemy as his most ready method of expression. In this manner we are enabled to see that Spiritual Alchemy was concerned, like the Ancient Mysteries and several later institutions, with the doctrine of rebirth; that is to say, with the passage of the soul from a sacramental death into a mystical life. The process has been familiar for centuries to many persons for whom all rites, mysteries, and concealed literatures of the past have been sealed things, for it is simply another phase of Christian teaching concerning the experience of conversion. We have, however, no occasion to dwell here on a matter which so particularly belongs to the churches and even to the sects, but it is well to register the fact, with the object of showing that, both within and without the circles of any secret knowledge, the same conceptions have so largely been present to the mind throughout many ages. Interpreting the term in its broadest sense, regeneration is the root and branch of all the instituted mysteries, and, however deeply implied, of Masonry in common with all. It has been said by one of the Masters that 'the divine spirit of a man is not one with his soul until after regeneration, which is the beginning of that intimate union which constitutes what is called mystically the marriage of the hierophant'; and, again, that when regeneration is fully attained, 'the divine spirit alone instructs the hierophant.'

So far as the past is concerned, incorporated mystic schools of the conscious order have scarcely existed in England, but there are traces of one sodality which connects with the present subject, and this is the Brotherhood of

C.R.C., understood to be the initiates of the illuminated father, Christian Rosy Cross. If I may assume my readers' acquaintance with the German legend of the order, first made public in the earliest years of the seventeenth century, I would ask them to go back in mind for a few moments thereto; to remember how in his early years he went eastwards in search of wisdom; how he attained a certain proficiency in the mysteries which were treasured in the East; how he returned finally to Europe, bearing the records of his travels; and how he attempted a reformation of arts and sciences, with the result which, more especially at that period, attached to efforts of the kind. He was brought in the end to a resource which was not unusual among the custodians of secret knowledge; and the new birth of time, if I may borrow for a moment the phraseology of Francis Bacon, was committed to the custody of the secret society which he founded under the name of the Rosicrucians. The brethren of that order drifted apart from one another, and in due time it is said that there were later associates who did not appear to have received undoubted communication of the entire knowledge, and were even unacquainted with the actual resting-place of their founder when the hour came for him to pass from this life. Certain investigations which are described in the legend by the subterfuge of building operations resulted, however, in the discovery of the sepulchre which he had made, and there is a very full and significant account concerning it given in a manifesto of the Fraternity. It is, of course, a symbolical account, and its actual significance has received earnest consideration on the part of many students following different lines of research and producing as a consequence different results. However this may be, for the moment it serves our purpose to know that the tomb was opened, and among the many wonders which were discovered, an incidental reference informs us that the body of the Master was included, but in that condition which suggests that it was in some sense immortal and incorruptible. In other words, that which had been put under the altar had undergone the change of the altar. I do not know whether this point has so far been noticed either by occult students or by critics of the ordinary kind;

but for my present purpose it is truly significant, because it indicates that, as in accordance with the idea of the old mysteries concerning rebirth and resurrection, something, as St. Paul says, had been sown in the natural order, and something after some mysterious manner is represented as having been raised, as we would say, in the spiritual order. We might have expected to find that the tomb of Christian Rosy Cross was empty, like the tomb of Christ on Easter Day, but this would not accord with the symbolism, in which the idea of rebirth is veiled. It should be noted, however, that secret orders possessing an inheritance from the past are now working the resurrection of C.R.C., as the final development of their rites, and for them at least, being dead, he yet speaketh.

I have devoted these few papers to Freemasonry in relation to universal initiation as a guide to those who are anxious to determine the kind of assistance which existing secret associations can give towards the elucidation of the old experiment of the mysteries. To exhaust the subject of the correspondences between Masonry and Mysticism would require many papers. For these reasons and in this place I must leave it at the point that I have reached. Students who are sufficiently concerned may extend the researches which I can only pretend to have opened through further fields of analogy; they may institute a comparison between certain characteristics of Masonic liturgies and those of mystic literature; and they will find even in many titles of Masonic dignity an unintended reference to mysticism.

The world of symbolism is a world of many resurrections, and within their law and their order there is one among these which is not only of all the highest but the most symbolic of all. Though I have described Masonry as the mirror of instituted initiation, it has been with no idea of transcendence, to which it is indeed without a title. It is the most proximate and available of the illustrations, and its reflection is fairly complete, as of great things by little. In its development it has never succeeded in completing the house which it set out to build, and it is only as something very far away that it recalls—in part by antithesis—that which is the mystery of all in exaltation, the nearest indeed of all, but the least comprehended. I suppose it is unnecessary to say that

I speak of the one Master who was neither Hiram nor another; those who enter into the comprehension of this mystery and, in fine, of all that which is veiled by the symbolic resurrection of the first Easter morning, will have no need of Masonry or the other instituted systems; and if ever what is known in the most secret of all sanctuaries could in any way be proclaimed on the housetops, their office would pass for ever, because, like the Lady of Shalott, in place of looking through the glass, and that inversely, we shall have looked to the mystic Camelot.

I have illustrated the weakness of the specialist by lapsing into abstruse matters and technicalities with the fatal facility of the just man when he falls seven times; but it is difficult to keep silence about the temple when the statues themselves speak. Let me therefore add, in conclusion, that if the doctrine of the New Birth is, as I understand it, the awakening from material life into that of the soul; if beyond the region of the senses there are houses not made with hands, where we shall be united in the holy assemblies to those who have elsewhere shared our exile; if therefore out of all this human darkness there come, in fine, light; and if this be also the testimony of religion, as it is certainly that of Masonry, then, as Martines de Pasqually said, we must even be content with what we have; and we may derive, in the last resource, a certain intellectual satisfaction that the higher knowledge of the Masonic Order does not differ generically from the higher understanding of the Faith, or either from that end which in all time has been the chief concern of man. The poets and their accomplished substitutes may please us, as they do indeed and certainly, but under all reserve I say that

The proper study of mankind is God.

By such considerations as I have given to the existing rites and to that which they transmit from the past, we are led back to the one subject, as will be the postulant of the various orders who, having first conceived intellectually the term of adeptship, goes in search of the light within them. He returns after long travelling, but he has described no barren circle of research, for to him will much have been communicated which otherwise he might never have attained, though it will not have been on subjects foreign to the implicits of his soul. This is equivalent to saying that the rites of initiation are certain formulæ of consciousness whereby that which is within him subsistently is educed; and as an offset to the common life of conventions this is in these days as much as can be reasonably expected from any office of the sanctuaries. It is possible that the postulant will be asked to try one journey more, but this time it will be in the region of first-hand experience, when he will realise how true is that dictum, already quoted from the old alchemists, that it is vain to attempt the practice till the working theory has been laid down. The possession of this he will owe to those things by which he has been so far guided. The path that, in this case, he will be called to follow henceforth, and possibly for ever, is that of the Holy Assembly, which I have named once in this book. It is not a path of grades and degrees by which the candidate is advanced symbolically to the heights. He will not enter any institution to which conventional recommendation is possible. The Assembly neither asks nor receives pledges, nor does it offer warrants or charters. It is perhaps, in so far as any designation is concerned, better spoken of under that title which I have named in another connection: silence in the mouth of the Almighty One. This is not because silence is imposed, but because entrance into the sodality is a certain matter of growth—a continual communication, as I have said, in the higher consciousness. The postulant for admission is such by the fact of his status. If the evidences of the Holy Assembly are so slight in mystic literature, although this is an intellectual difficulty, it must be remembered that we are dealing with a state which is in transcendence by comparison with all states manifested here below, being that, as I conceive it, in which the Subject is withdrawn no longer into secret places but into its own concealment. There is only one word more: Whether the postulant whom I have supposed succeeds or fails, he will learn that high reason warrants everything that has been said here to show that the mystic life leads no one from the life of the Church.

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